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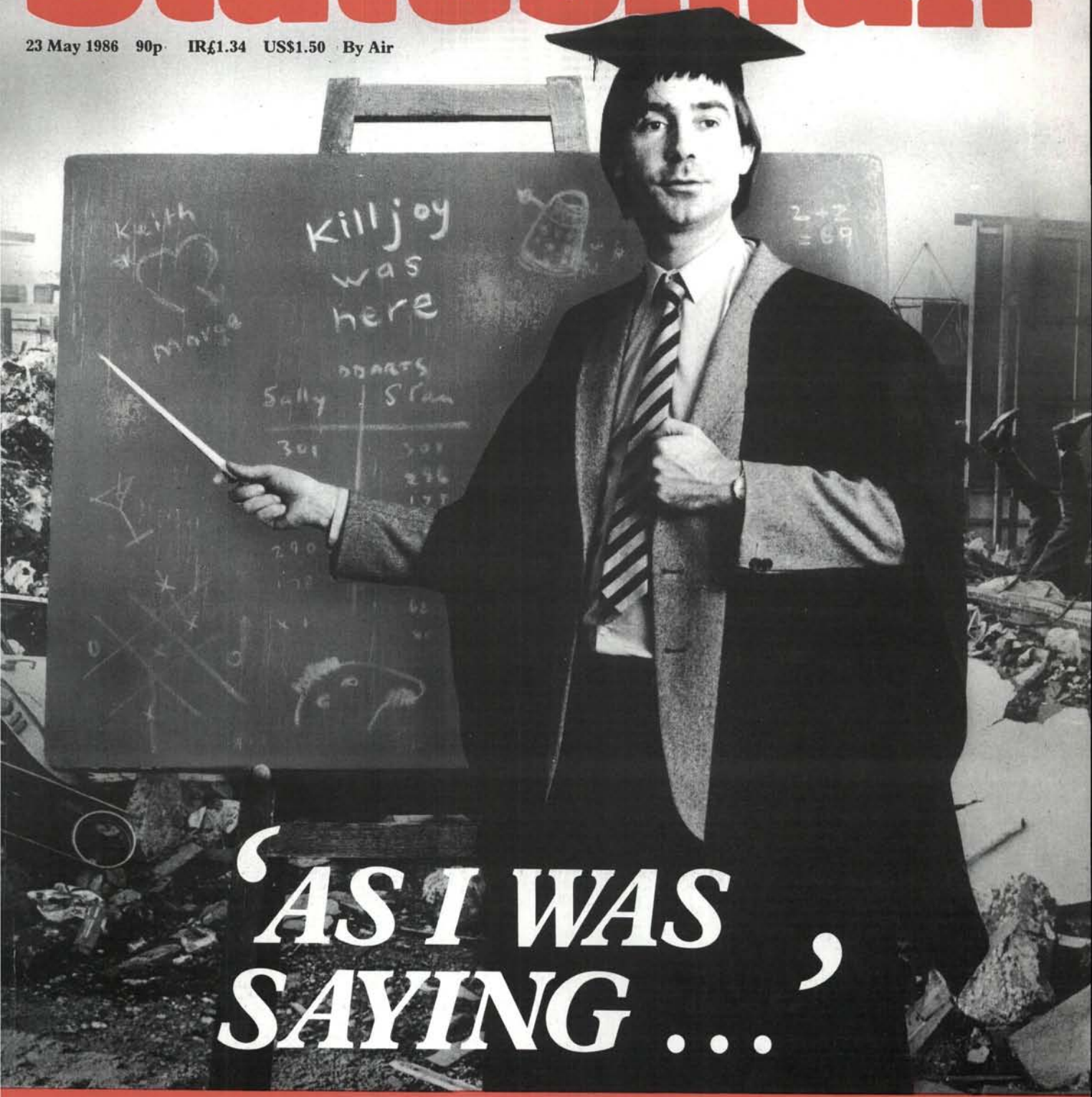

'AS I WAS SAYING . . .'

KWESI OWUSU: Europe's debt to Black culture

SUZANNE CRONJE: Snake in the veldt

STEVE REDHEAD: Tory-type football

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New Statesman

Cover montage: Michael Bennett

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NEXT WEEK

A PASSION FOR FRIENDS

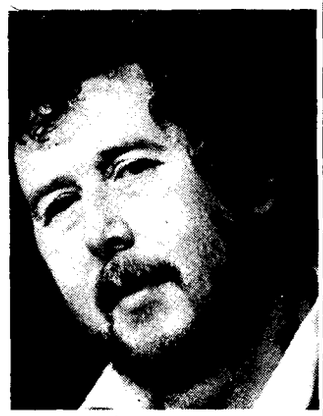
When women cut themselves off from the world, believing they find freedom in separation, they only get a worm's eye view of it. And that makes women less powerful argues JANICE RAYMOND in this extract from her controversial new book

POLITICS IN SCHOOL

'Protect our children from politics,' cries Baroness Cox. It's the politicians who are terrified of politics in school says MOYRA GRANT. Let's have more of it, properly taught

POLITICAL POP

JON SAVAGE reviews David Widgery's account of Rock Against Racism, *Beating Time*



NIGHT AT THE OPERA

ANDREW CLEMENTS reports back from the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's opera *The Mask of Orpheus*

New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2878 23 May 1986

ACPO Rules is not OK

'POLICE STATE' is so loaded a political term that most people in this country — most readers of the *New Statesman* even — have not grasped the huge distance that we have moved in the direction of becoming a police state under the present government. Taken singly, the steps may not appear to be undermining the basis of what in previous decades would have been thought of as the proper British compromise between the requirements of the state to maintain law and order and the civil rights of the citizen. Taken together, that balance has been decisively shifted since 1979.

At the centre of this shift has been the creation by stealth of a national police force. This week we have had two announcements from the Home Secretary which show that Mr Hurd and his Home Office officials do not think it even any longer necessary to proceed by stealth.

On Monday he signalled a further significant militarisation of the British police force on an explicitly centralised basis, when he announced arrangements under which chief constables can now get hold of rubber bullets and CS gas and use them, even when their elected police authority has said that they should not. On Tuesday he announced increases in overall national policing strength for both officers and civilians, without even bothering to pretend that police forces outside London are constitutionally employed by local authorities and financed from the rates. He was explicitly recognising what has now become the reality, namely that policing in this country is run by an extra-constitutional and (in theory) informal body — the Association of Chief Police Officers.

In terms of control and accountability, policing in this country has become rather like farming — with the Police Federation playing a parallel role to that of the National Union of Farmers and the Home Office one to that of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. A strong Minister of Agriculture may try giving the farmers a bit less than they are demanding. Ditto a strong Home Secretary to the police. But an ambitious minister in either case is unlikely to do so, because in the world of Whitehall political reputations are made by spending barons who fight their departmental corners successfully and satisfy their sponsored clients.

The Home Office used to claim that it was only expected to answer directly for policing in the nation's capital. But now the Home Office is openly the Ministry of Police and Mr Hurd knows that, just as the Minister of Agriculture is the farmers' 'sponsoring minister', so he must now think of himself as ACPO's sponsor — or suffer personal political consequences in the Great Succession Stakes.

After Mr Hurd's Monday statement, no one can any longer argue that policing policy and operations are the responsibility of local authorities. The truth about the centralisation of the national policing function became evident during the miners' strike. But then it was just possible to pretend semi-plausibly that ACPO was only a co-ordinating organisation based in Scotland Yard.

No longer. 'It is clearly right that chief officers should have baton rounds and CS equipment', said Mr Hurd. To whom is it clearly right? There is still a heated debate raging on this very subject. Particularly in relation to baton rounds/rubber bullets, most of the evidence is that their use is dangerous and ineffective. What Mr Hurd's 'it is clearly right' means is that, without that debate being

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resolved, without Parliament, or local authorities, or some commission of enquiry sifting the evidence, pressure from ACPO on the Home Office has resulted in a major shift in the nature of policing on the British mainland.

THE HURD statement went out of its way to remove any vestige of local political accountability in this matter. A chief officer 'who is having problems with his police authority' (ie one who is refusing to accept the policy it has laid down) can get 1,000 rounds at the taxpayers' expense from HM Inspector of Constabulary and more, if required 'for particular operations'. The Met's training centre in the use of baton rounds and CS gas will be made available 'at an economic cost' to other forces. If the police authority *won't*, the taxpayer *will* cough up for such training.

The sop of greater safeguards in the use of rubber bullets and CS gas in no way disguises the shift in the politics of policing that is involved. Each time in future that a rubber bullet is fired in anger, a report will have to go to the Home Secretary — not, note, to the police authority (more central control, not less). The bullets and the gas can only be fired by officers trained to use the equipment. What sort of a safeguard is that supposed to be? Even a Tory Home Secretary couldn't stand up and say that they could be fired by *untrained* officers.

Policy is now being decided by ACPO and rubber stamped by the Home Office. Since the trend towards a national police force is, for technological and operational reasons, so strong, the cry that local police forces should once again be made *entirely* accountable locally is unrealistic. There needs to be a rethinking of the financial and political structure of policing — possibly even by a Royal Commission — to recommend ways to restore proper accountability to a system where ACPO is now accountable to nobody but itself.

A state where the police are in effect only accountable to the police is a police state. □

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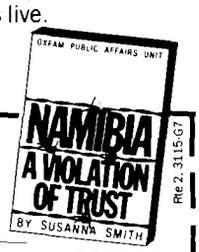

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The end's in sight

IT IS ALMOST impossible to predict the exact timing of revolution in any country. In 1905 it didn't happen; in 1917 it did.

A quarter of a century ago, in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, there were confident predictions that the white regime in South Africa was in the process of losing control. The British (Conservative) government of the day itself believed this and for a few months was concerned to get to know the Blacks who were on the point of taking over.

Instead we have had a quarter of a century of rising repression by the Afrikaner regime and the imprisonment of those, including Nelson Mandela, who were then supposed to be on the point of power. It is still possible that white South Africa, with its back against the wall, has several years to run before it is swept aside.

All that can now be said with certainty is that it will be swept aside. If that point is reached soon, only one government (besides Israel, whose ability to play both ends against the middle in Africa is extraordinary) will have remained firmly on the wrong side to the end — the wrong side morally, or course, but also the wrong side economically and politically — the British government. Even Reagan's America is trying to hedge its bets.

Mrs Thatcher's policy towards South Africa is bankrupt on all counts. Even her political admirer, ex-PM Malcolm Fraser of Australia, cannot understand what she is up to. To pretend that there is any serious mileage for a 'moderate' solution to be extracted from the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (see Suzanne Cronje, page 17) is pure whistling for the wind.

When the EPG was set up after the Bahamas Commonwealth Meeting last autumn it was a sop to Mrs Thatcher, who was in a dug-in minority of one against imposing economic sanctions against South Africa there and then. It is set to report by next month if possible with proposals acceptable to the South African government *and* to the African National Congress. The South African government has had its proposals for over two months. And this week it gave its response — bombing raids against the capitals of three of its Black neighbours.

There are those who suggest that the Botha government authorised the three, admittedly pretty ineffective raids in order to be able to face its right-wing white opposition when it agrees to free Mandela unconditionally and recognise the ANC. Even if there is anything in this unlikely explanation, it will not work. If Botha releases Mandela and recognises the ANC, he will lose political control of his own white tribe of Boers.

For there is no compromise, however ingenious on paper, that can reconcile, or be acceptable to, the Blacks and the whites in South Africa. Any hope of a negotiated settlement, which leaves the whites in social or economic — let alone political — terms with anything like the position of their equivalents in Zimbabwe, let alone in Kenya, died long ago. They will, of course, hold on until the end, but the end is at last in sight. □

How's that?

WE THOUGHT that the cliche 'cricket isn't a game, its a way of life' was just a joke, deployed for the benefit of foreigners. The pompous oligarchs of the game seem to take it seriously (Establishment v I. Botham) and decided that adultery, drunken driving, cruelty to animals is permissible but a joint and you're out.

It is the second ludicrous establishment decision this month. The test selectors should clearly have ousted David Gower from the captaincy and allowed him to get back to his batting. Mike Gatting was ready, willing and able to take over. We would call for the resignation of the whole of the Test and County cricket establishment by name, but we can't find from the public prints who they are. □

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£40,000 on Labour to win

BOOKMAKERS Coral have had enquiries from a client wanting to put £40,000 on Labour to win the most seats at the next election. Coral are offering the most competitive odds, 10-11 on, which would net their client a profit of £32,364 after tax. Coral's Ronnie Vannan described the planned bet as 'in the way of an insurance policy'.

What with the stock market suffering its first severe bout of pre-election jitters, the smart money's taking the possibility of a Labour victory seriously. If you think Labour will stay ahead, put your money on at Coral now — Ladbroke and William Hill already have Labour heavily odds-on favourites (8-11 and 4-5 respectively) so you won't get much for your money there.

If the next general election is in October 1987, Coral's client will earn an after-tax return of 57 per cent at an annual rate on her or his investment. This just goes to show that a Labour government is good for capitalists.

The local and by-elections a fortnight ago, and last week's *Daily Telegraph* Gallup poll, have persuaded two bookies to say the Tories have a less than even chance of winning most seats, which is unprecedented. Ladbroke still have the Tories at evens, but William Hill and Coral both quote 11-10 against.

Despite winning the Ryedale by-election, the Liberal/SDP Alliance have dropped back. Coral have marked them down from 10-1 to 12-1 outsiders. But Ladbroke have already marked them down from 12-1 to 14-1, at which they're almost worth a flutter.

The famous *NS Tick Tack Index* shows Labour's steady advance from the low of 33 per cent last December goes on (the change on last month's figure in brackets).

Labour	49	(+2)
Tories	43	(−2)
Lib/SDP	8	(0)

The score is the percentage probability of each party winning the most seats at the next election implied by the odds quoted by Ladbroke, William Hill and Coral.

Meanwhile, in the 'Next Leader of the Tory Party' Handicap, Safe Pair of Hands is coming up on the rails. Ladbroke's odds on Sir Geoffrey Howe have shortened to 7-4. Peter Walker's still at 5-2. Norman Tebbit's a good furlong behind on 4-1 (down from 3-1), but resuming third place as Douglas Hurd sinks back to 6-1. Everyone else, including David Owen, is at 10-1.

John Rentoul

APRON LIFTS ON THE WESTMINSTER MASONS

The existence of a masonic Lodge at Westminster has long been suspected but no evidence has ever been forthcoming. This week the *New Statesman* produces incontrovertible testimony — from a Tory MP and practising mason — that the Brotherhood has a presence in the House of Parliament, and that MPs, members of the House of Lords and journalists from the Press Gallery meet behind closed doors.

JOHN SWEENEY reports

UPP

Neil Thorne MP: 'The Prime Minister isn't one'

FREEMASONS who talk about the Craft to non-masons risk all sort of unpleasantness, including having 'my tongue torn out by the root, and buried in the sand of the sea at low water mark,' etc. So it is all the more astonishing for Neil Thorne MP (Tory, Ilford) to admit to the *New Statesman* that there is a freemasons' lodge at Westminster of about 50 to 60 brothers.

According to the current *Masonic Year Book*, of which we have obtained a copy, Thorne is one of a handful of MPs who have risen to Grand Officer level, and therefore merits inclusion in the *Yearbook*'s roll of honour. The other MPs are the former Solicitor General Sir Ian Percival QC (Tory, Southport) and the former health minister Sir Gerard Vaughan (Tory, Reading). One Euro-MP, Sir Peter Vanneck, former Lord Mayor of London and ADC to the Queen, who now sits for Cleveland Yorkshire North, and one retired MP, Sir Charles Taylor (Tory, Eastbourne 1935-74) also feature in the yearbook, which is restricted in circulation to high-ranking members.

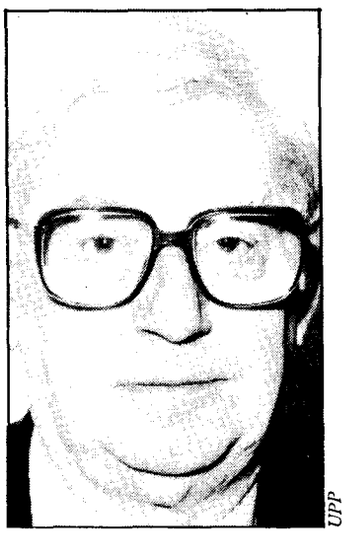
Exclusive

Thorne, a Grand Steward, tells the *New Statesman*: 'There are about 50 to 60 members of the lodge at Westminster. That would include MPs, members of the House of Lords, people from the Press Gallery and elsewhere. It also includes people who have been MPs but have since left.

'The Westminster lodge would meet at Great Queen Street. It would have nothing to do with people hoping to become Cabinet ministers. The Prime Minister isn't one.'

Mrs Thatcher because she is a woman is automatically barred from joining the freemasons. Thorne is anxious to downplay the secrecy surrounding the masons, but declines to name any other Parliamentary members of the Craft. He says he doesn't know of any members of the present Cabinet who are masons: 'It's often a case of going along to a meeting and saying "Good Heavens, fancy seeing you here!" '.

Thorne is keen to emphasise the charitable aspects of freemasonry,



UPP

Sir Ian Percival MP: 'Why the hell should it worry you?'

including gifts of substantial sums to cancer research and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Yet he's also aware of the possibility that the good aims of freemasonry can be corrupted: 'You're bound to get in all walks of life the odd bad egg. But I would find it obnoxious if someone came up to me and said that he was a mason. As far as the suggestion that I personally have benefited from being a freemason then that is completely untrue. In fact it is a dis-benefit because a higher standard is expected of one.'

Sir Ian Percival is less happy to talk about his masonic activities. When it was put to him that some people are worried about the secrecy of the Brotherhood (eg in the Metropolitan Police) Sir Ian replied: 'Why the hell should it worry you? We don't go round asking whether you're a member of the Garrick or a Catholic or Protestant. There's nothing secret about masons, it's just a private affair'. Asked he knows any masons in Parliament, Sir Ian replied: 'I don't know of them.' And asked if he knows Neil Thorne, Sir Ian said: 'This is offensive and hostile questioning. I'm a mason and proud of it. The last thing I would do would be to use it for private purposes and I greatly resent being asked about it. The whole world knows about masons. This is hostile cross-examination . . . ' And then he hung up. The other Parliamentary masons declined to return phonecalls.

No doubt the Brotherhood in its Parliamentary manifestation is as innocuous as can be. It was however the Legislature which in 1799 passed the Nore Mutiny Act prohibiting the administration of secret oaths as part of any ceremony of admission. The same Act which in the 1830s was used to sentence the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' to transportation for trades-union activity. ●

See also NS *2 May for masons in the top judiciary*

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Following bombing of Tripoli

Peace Protests Roll Call (27)

Total arrested in the UK and Eire since September 1981: 10,716

Arrests to date by location

Nottingham City Centre **22**
17.4.86. 22 women arrested after a sit-down demo in a busy main road in protest over the US bombing of Libya. Road blocked for an hour. Drivers stopped by the blockade hooted their support and gave thumbs up sign; local people and shoppers also gave their support. All later released without charge.

US Embassy, Grosvenor Square **15**
16.4.86. 15 arrested after sit-down outside Embassy. 5 people were charged and later appeared at Bow Street Magistrates.

Whitehall, Downing Street **183**
16.4.86. 183 arrests after a sit-down outside Downing Street in protest over US bombing of Libya. 30 were taken to Southwark police station where 24 were charged with obstruction of the highway. One juvenile was released w/out charge but cautioned and 5 others released w/out charge. 130 taken to Rochester Row police station. 10 charged with mainly obstruction, others released w/out charge. 23 taken to Bow Street and charged with obstruction.

Oxford Street, London **40**
19.4.86. 40 arrests after a sit-down in Oxford Street to protest about the US bombing of Libya. Thousands had marched from US Embassy to Hyde Park — many who sat down were violently arrested by police, who were accused of lifting women by ears, noses and hair, inserting gloved fingers in mouths and yanking people upright. E. P. Thompson was among those roughly treated (he was later found to be covered with bruises): he was released without being arrested when one police officer realised who he was.

US Welford, Berks. Major US Ammunitions Store **15**
19.4.86. Rebecca Johnson and four others, three of them American women, were arrested and charged with criminal damage at the bomb establishment. Rebecca Johnson was injured when she refused to kneel when ordered to by a US soldier. All US soldiers were carrying rifles and sub-machine guns. She was later treated in hospital, then held with the others at Newbury police station. All were detained in single cells until their court appearances on 21 April. All 5 pleaded not guilty and will appear in court at a later date.
19.4.86. 10 women arrested after leaving paper messages all over Class 1.2 bombs and hangars. They witnessed several US soldiers going off duty in private cars armed with guns. Protest was also over US bombing of Libya.

USAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire **22**
16.4.86. 15 women arrested and released w/out charge after painting the word 'Murderers' on the runway after the bombing of Libya.
21.4.86. 5 Greenham women sat on edge of cockpits of two F-111s which had their engines running (they were also protesting over bombing raid). Charged with 'concerned together to cause damage to USAF aircraft'. Held on remand for eight days then released on £300 surety each and told not to enter any nuclear establishment. On 14 May at Banbury Magistrates all 5 pleaded not guilty. Bail conditions still apply. New hearing date now 8/9 July.
19.4.86. 13 people took part in the National Snowball action: two arrested.

USAF Fairford, Glos. **8**
20.4.86. Over 2,000 people gathered in protest over US bombing of Libya. 5 arrests also made after a Snowball action at the base. 3 pleaded guilty, 2 others to appear before magistrates.
23.4.86. 3 women entered the base. Strolled among hangars and aircraft for some time. Arrested by ten armed US soldiers, detained 9 hours and released w/out charge.

Dungeness Nuclear Power Station, Kent **3**
19.4.86. 3 arrested on 8th stage National Snowball, charged with cr. damage.

St Mawgan US Radio Communications Centre, Cornwall **60**
20.4.86. 60 arrested on National Snowball. Held in disused warehouses for some time. Released w/out charge but told they may later be charged with cr. damage.

Greenham Common, Berks. **61**
19.4.86. 15 women arrested released w/out charge — protest over Libyan bombing.
19.4.86. One woman arrested and detained after putting a daffodil on fence. Two others who remonstrated with MoD over this arrested and charged with obstructing a police officer. Altogether 40 women have been charged with various offences inside the base and 2 outside the base in the period Jan-30 April.
To end of April, approx 3,979 women have been arrested at Greenham.

Please send new information to **Janey Hulme** *at the* New Statesman

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE '86

'NO PROGRESS SEEMS EVER TO BE ACHIEVED'

SARAH BENTON travelled to last weekend's 61st National Conference of Labour Women, exiled to Rothesay on the Isle of Bute off western Scotland (as the south sees it). She describes the frustration at lack of progress no matter whether women take the constitutional routes, the trade union routes, or 'middle class feminist' (*pejorative*) routes. And the deep divisions as the three days wore on

WHEN BETH WAGSTAFF, London-based feminist, moved that Larry Whitty, the Labour Party's general secretary, shouldn't be allowed to address the annual Labour women's conference because there were more important things to do with the time, there were shocked mutterings round the hall. At this latest evidence of the intractable bad behaviour of middle class feminists, the Transport and General Workers' Union women's officer, Margaret Prosser, stormed to the rostrum to denounce the move as 'ill-mannered, shortsighted and shows the complete lack of understanding of the need for women to work with men.'

It was impossible not to sympathise with Whitty, who had endured the long and tedious exile to the Isle of Bute (the only political party venue known where it is impossible to buy a 'quality' national newspaper) only to be faced with a possible smart dismissal. Ms Wagstaff was dismissed instead, and Larry Whitty told approving delegates that some progress was being made.

An equal opportunities programme had been instituted at Head Office in Walworth Road. The band of recalcitrant Labour Organisers had finally come round to let in part-time organisers, thus more women. BUT (and for most of the conference it was all in the BUT): sexism and paternalism were rife in the Labour Party, and men had to be forced to share power. Clearly they hadn't so far. The number of women chosen as prospective Parliamentary candidates was, said Whitty, 'desperately disappointing and frankly deplorable.'

A rare heroine

His judgment on that is probably one of the few views shared by virtually every woman at the conference. When Joan Ruddock went to the rostrum to speak on nuclear power, her very appearance drew a round of spontaneous applause, a rare accolade in a party where one faction's hero is usually the other's traitor. On this occasion, the applause was a mark of recognition that Ms Ruddock is one of the most outstanding individuals (of either sex) that the Labour Party has produced for a long time. And of sympathy that she has failed to get selected for a safe Labour seat, an endeavour in which many less-talented men have succeeded.

There would again be little disagreement that while a safe dull man can serve his 'apprenticeship' in interminable evening meetings, cultivating the right contacts and style, most women have different priorities, whether those are their children's needs or the different

All photos: Brenda Prince/Format

Margaret Prosser: defending the union view

circuits of peace or feminist politics.

Indeed most of the women there (around 520 from the voting figures; this conference publishes no figures on the number or category of delegates) would say they are agreed on their aims. They all want women to have a much bigger and more direct say in the Labour Party, want to see far more women prominent in the life of the labour movement generally, want far more active campaigning on those issues which women care about most deeply, from the shocking wages that most women receive to an overall emphasis on peace and welfare. Motions on the welfare state outstripped any other subject by far (23, compared with 13 on employment).

Yet despite this apparent consensus on what advancement for women means, a deep and damaging division between women became more apparent as the three days wore on. Its first sign was an attack, in a leaflet produced by the Women's Action Committee on a resolution

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put forward by NUPE on women's organisation. Its second, an impromptu meeting of women trade union delegates, called by ASTMS delegate Mel Reed on Saturday. Feelings at that meeting were already high as women spoke angrily of the high-handed and hectoring ways of feminists, Militant and other alien voices.

All their fantasy fears, said Diane Abbott who had come from that meeting to one organised by WAC. They are different — older, from outside London, they don't understand our politics, they are manipulated by hard, right-wing women. We must do our best to build bridges. Ann Pettifor, a leading WAC activist and member of the Labour National Women's Committee, also spoke forgivingly. 'There were plenty of slaves who would kiss the feet of the slave owners.'

Of course, it was exactly this view of them that infuriated the trade union women. They felt horribly patronised. Margaret Jamieson, the leader of the NUPE delegation whose long resolution calling for the NEC and national women's committee to engage in a process of consultation about women's representation was the immediate source of the dispute, was angry. Their resolution hadn't been drawn up by a man, she insisted, as WAC was alleging. They weren't against WAC's aims, they just thought their ways were getting nowhere. They got people's hackles up by seeming so anti-men. WAC did nothing but argue for constitutional reform, said many. Unlike Militant, which discovered women's sections a few years ago, to good effect (they won almost all 'their' votes) WAC organises no campaigns for women.

It did, however, win its entire slate (Ms Pettifor's boss Frances Morrell pipping Briefing's Sarah Roelof) in the approved Shadow Elections for the 5 NEC seats. Most unions refused to participate in what Ms Jamieson denounced as a 'gimmick.'

On the day, the much vilified but unrepentant Ms Pettifor delivered a long and statespersonlike speech, defining NUPE's resolution as an historic step forward — a union contribution — but also a step backward from the demands previously passed by women's conferences. NUPE's resolution was defeated on a card vote by 256 votes to 202.

Margaret Creear: leading Militant supporter, a successful conference for them

Ann Pettifor: vilified leading WACer

Years of frustration

Much of the bitterness is a product of the tremendous frustration of all the women. Whatever measure they use, from wages to constitutional change in the Labour Party, no progress for women seems to have been achieved. If the fault lies partly with the unions, few of whom take the conference seriously enough to send in considered resolutions or full delegations thus ensuring they are outnumbered by the constituencies — then NUPE's careful process of consultation might have been a step forward.

But there is undoubtedly a gulf of understanding and experience between the union delegates and 'middle class feminists.' The feminists are undoubtedly justified in seeing the unions as conservative; it is the feminists who have radicalised and revitalised Labour's women's sections, the union women have sat back holding to a more traditional and limited view of a political party. As in 1906, its main role is to get into government to pass laws to benefit the labour movement.

Yet despite the class rhetoric which almost every Labour feminist employs, there is refusal to recognise that there *is* a conflict between a feminist consciousness — stressing women's autonomy — and class consciousness — which demands cross-sex class solidarity, and makes middle class women, despite the sisterhood, suspect allies. Perhaps it is an uncomfortable recognition of this which makes the reiterated evocation of the common enemy — the white, middle aged, middle class male bureaucrat — merely a symbolic shield against reality. ●

MISCELLANY

As the Tories frantically play Unhappy Families and see what reshuffling the Cabinet will do for them, meet the Bergers

Hello landlord

Who are among the biggest private residential landlords in Britain, criticised for 12 years for appalling conditions in blocks of flats concentrated in London and Scotland. In August, Shelter plan to move to an Old Street, London, building owned by Land Investors. Last week LI was taken over for £74 million by BPCH, a new company controlled by . . . the Bergers. One of the most detailed exposes of the Bergers was five years ago in *Roof* — published by Shelter.

A helicopter speaks

Toryballs: Michael Heseltine on *Newsnight* 19 May: 'I wouldn't set off with one ingredient, and say that's the rock round which everything else should rotate . . . '

It's coming . . .

Things are at a fine pass when even the theatre critics have become 'state of the art', but there they were at the £40,000 fund-raiser Action on Aids *performance of* Young England *at the Adelphi last Sunday: two critics with lap word-processors, doing the Tynan in their seats even as the show went on. One more twist in the technology and they'll be real-time to*

the printer, direct from the stalls, even before the end of Act 1: '. . . typically mannered performance from X . . .'. *If the lighting technicians could then hack into the system, the actors could throw cabbages at the critics as Act 2 gets underway. A whole new meaning to live theatre.*

Demolition job

Interesting conversion: Sir Nigel Broackes, builder, 'a Conservative to his public school core and an enduring admirer of Mrs Thatcher' (*FT* 19 May): 'If this government doesn't get itself sorted out it'll be replaced by another one. It could be that a change would be refreshing'.

Unbuttered parsnip

Fancy. Peter Bruinvels, unpronouncable Tory MP for the demoralised inhabitants of Leicester East, and the character of immortal fame who said that if no-one else is ready to be public hangman, he is, has caught his foot in his mouth. Unprecedented. At a press-seduction to launch the new report on Combined Heat & Power, 'most realistic short-term alternative to nuclear power', he made the absurd error of praising the author — the NS*'s very own Rob Edwards. 'Dear Peter, the* NS *is a left-wing rag . . . yours Norman. Now belt up'.*

Collection can . . .

The great unwashed, that's you out there, have been reported to be either baffled or making large sums of money (good!) on the back of the *New Statesman Stock Exchange Collection Car Project*, launched here 21 March as Thatcher cried 'caring capitalism.' Given that we can't (as yet) will away the Stock Exchange, we at the *NS* felt that the next best thing was to make money out of it on behalf of varying good causes, enlisting you, dear reader, as the means of so doing. So far our efforts have been blessed with considerable success, and a lowly £1 million invested two months ago would have grown by 33 per cent (net of dealing charges), or to put it another way your favourite cause/s would now be roughly £300,000 better off.

. . . blooms

This has attracted the ire of such august journals as the *Spectator;* a few weeks back Christopher Fildes grumbled obliquely that making 'tips' was no bad thing (no names, no pack drill), but had humble Spectators followed his own 'tips' yah boo sucks, they would be enormously wealthy. Well Christopher that may be so, but we thought your column was devoted to orotund musings on the City, rather than the more demanding route of producing a hunch a week that we've been following. For the record last week's *Can* suggestion was 'buy Shell' — that's showing a 5 per cent profit at the moment. Sell out now on both this (the oil price should start to drop back) and Plessey (5 per cent loss — oh dear) whose good figures haven't materialised. On the back of the oil price slide, sell BP. Profits to . . . what shall we say? . . . *Embargo*, the campaign, now doing so well, to get institutional investors to boycott companies invested in South Africa, including Shell.

Reptile

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SCRUTINY

POWER STAYS STRIKE-FREE

THE WEEK opened with yet another group of trade union militants trying to bring the country to its knees in an industrial dispute. DAVID THOMAS charts a realignment in the union movement

THE ELECTRICIAN's union EETPU called off their threatened overtime ban in the power stations, when the employers boosted their pay offer. The electricians under Eric Hammond may be famous for their strike-free deals and for putting the boot into Arthur Scargill, but they are also the largest of the electricity manual unions.

What's more, some surprising smoke signals hovered over the union's annual conference in Scarborough last week.

- Just because we're right wing doesn't mean we'll back your incomes policy, the union told any Labour Party leaders who cared to listen.
- The EETPU is now seen as perhaps the best hope of forcing a settlement at Wapping. It alone of the unions retains leverage over News International, precisely because it has members inside the barbed wire thanks to its co-operation with the company before the move to Wapping.

So, is the EETPU on the move? Is the Left about to lose its hate figure in the Labour Movement?

Almost certainly not. True, the union's leadership did not like the view into the abyss when it came near to suspension from the TUC over Wapping, so it may be trimming a bit now.

Leon Kuhn

'We are restoring industrial peace to Britain.' CONSERVATIVE ELECTION ADDRESS, CAMDEN

But there's no reason to believe that the EETPU is in retreat from its devotion to 'market-based trade unionism'. Its recent moves do not clash with its basic ideology at all.

It would suit the union very well to have the ring fence put around Wapping by the TUC lifted. And it was thoroughly uncomfortable with incomes policies back in the 1970s, believing (correctly) that they compressed differentials, hitting skilled workers who are the core of its members. And the row in the electricity industry only boiled up now because the EETPU didn't want to open a second front with the miners in last year's pay round.

Out of the groove

For new initiatives in the union movement, look not to the EETPU, but to the General, Municipal and Boilermakers, the centrist giant under its new boss John Edmonds.

Edmonds has already lifted the debate about how to replace Tory union laws out of the dull groove into which it had settled, by stressing better rights at work for real workers and downplaying 'rights for unions', which are neither understood nor loved by many union members. He is thinking hard too about how to tackle low pay and how unions should focus recruiting in the service sector.

Less clear is whether the GMB under Edmonds could lead a re-alignment of the Left in the unions to parallel the re-alignment in the Labour Party. That would give a real alternative to the union hard Right like the EETPU and the traditional Left struck in its time warp.

This re-alignment could take in unions like NUPE, the left-wing public service union, which backed Labour's purge of Militant leaders in Liverpool at its conference this week. On the right, it could cover unions like the Union of Communication Workers, which is coming up with radically new policies on regaining public control of privatised assets. It could win support too in the Transport and General Workers' Union, which now has a less hard-line executive.

But squabbles like last week's election for the chair of the TUC Economic Committee, when Edmonds and Rodney Bickerstaffe of NUPE found themselves on different sides of a 9 to 8 vote, show that an effective soft-left block is some way off. More's the pity. ●

Judge Argyle must go

WHEN LIFE sentences are reduced to three years, more than an error of judgement is involved. Lord Lane this week quashed the life sentence imposed on 'soccer thug' Kevin Whitton, saying it was 'wrong in principle' and 'entirely inappropriate'.

In November Judge Michael Argyle, who's 70, gave Whitton life for 'waving his fist in a menacing fashion, and lashing out with his feet', which the jury decided was 'riot'. In the approving media coverage the life sentence was linked with horrific pictures of a pub manager's face — for his supposed part in this separate incident Whitton got 10 years for grievous bodily harm. This is now reduced to seven years, although the two sentences, will, unusually, run consecutively not concurrently, to add up to 10 years.

This week the media again confused the two offences, allowing Tory politicians to condemn Lord Lane and the two other Appeal Court judges for being soft on hooliganism.

Luckily ITN's *News At Ten* on Monday gave a Labour frontbencher the chance to attack Lord Lane for being soft on vindictive judges. But Home Affairs spokesperson Robin Corbett also laid into Lane for sending 'completely the wrong signal' to football hooligans, although he does agree off-camera that riot is too catch-all an offence.

The government, which raised the proposed maximum for a redefined offence of riot from 10 years to life in response to Argyle's verdict, may now reduce it again. But the National Council for Civil Liberties would like Britain brought into line with other countries with a similar offence. Australia, New Zealand and India all have maxima of three years for riot.

In the *New Statesman* of 15 November 1985 we outlined some of the weaknesses of the prosecution case against Whitton. The conviction for the face-slashing offence rested on identification by just one witness in an informal identification parade in which Whitton was the only black man. But the Appeal Court judges upheld both convictions.

John Rentoul

Good housekeeping

THE GOVERNMENT's plan to cut half of claimants' mortgage payments for the first six months on the dole (from which Downing Street is backpedalling fast, and no wonder) would save £30 million a year.

FACT: The rich who pay higher rate income tax get an extra subsidy through tax relief on their mortgages of *ten times as much*: £320 million last year and an estimated £290 million this year.

Technical note: If you earn enough to go into the top 60 per cent tax bracket — about £45,000 a year — mortgage interest relief is worth twice as much to you as to a standard 29 per cent taxpayer. Mortgage interest payments are deducted from your income before tax; the effect is to reduce the amount of income that gets taxed at your top rate.

John Rentoul

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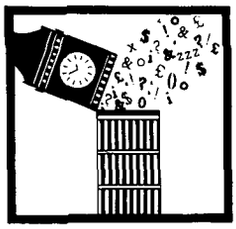

When people are right and statistics are wrong

PETER KELLNER

FOR ANYONE who takes numbers seriously, two of the silliest sayings are Benjamin Disraeli's: 'There are lies, damned lies and statistics'; and its modern variant: 'You can prove anything with figures'.

Statistics that are carefully collected and properly used are indispensible to serious analysis of politics, economics, science, education, sport — indeed, almost any aspect of collective human activity. Without some means of aggregating the behaviour of people, we can do no more than build on the unreliable foundations of individual examples. A more accurate saying would be: 'There are lies, damned lies and anecdotes'.

With my bias in favour of figures thus established, if it needed establishing, I fear I must report than many of the statistics at the heart of today's main political debates are misleading. On economic growth, industrial output, jobs and prices, things are not what they seem.

First, economic growth. Most forecasts reckon that output will grow by about 3 per cent this year. The latest forecasts assume (rightly) that the fall in oil prices will boost production in the rest of the economy. But, because of the way the figures are compiled, they take no account of the collapse in the price of oil on the value of North Sea oil itself.

The point is simply illustrated. If an oil-producing state does nothing except extract oil and export it, and if the price of oil halves, then it does not take an economic wizard to work out that the country's income is halved. Yet, according to the way we assemble our figures for the gross domestic product, that change would not show up.

Last year Britain had a balance of trade surplus in oil of £8.2 billion. When the full effects of the fall in oil prices are felt, this surplus is likely to fall to £3 billion. In terms of what Britain's oil allows us to buy in the outside world, we will have lost about £5 billion worth of income. That is about 1.5 per cent of our GDP.

It may be that the general stimulus to the economy of lower prices will plug this gap and that we will produce an extra £5 billion of goods and services, either for export or as a substitution for imports. If we do, there will be more jobs. But Britain's *income* will be no higher. That extra output will simply offset the loss in the value of our oil income. Like a wayward son in a Victorian novel for whom the sudden disappearance of part of his allowance causes him to work harder, the end result is that we as a nation are likely to *do* more and *spend* less.

MANUFACTURING output ought to be simpler to measure; and the story the government was telling earlier this year was a cheerful one. In January, when a new and supposedly improved way of doing the sums was unveiled, it looked as if output in the 12 months to last November (the latest month for which figures were then available) had risen by 4 per cent.

Last week new figures were published. Most attention was paid to the (not-very-good) March results. But the revised figures for November make sad reading. For the fourth consecutive month they had been revised downwards. We now know, or we think we know, that manufacturing output in the 12 months to last November rose not by a tolerably healthy 4 per cent but by a measly 2.4 per cent.

How on earth do the statisticians make such mistakes? Their problem is that they make their first estimates on incomplete returns from manufacturing companies. They take the raw data and make their best guess about the information that is missing, tweaking the figures accordingly. In later months, as more data comes in, they revise their earlier estimates.

In the past, the earliest estimates have often been too low, and have later been revised upwards. This hurt statisticians who felt that they had not got their 'tweaking' system right; and it hurt ministers who felt that they were not able to tell the full story of how well British industry was doing.

So, starting in January, a new system for tweaking the raw figures was introduced. In essence, it involved guessing by how much the data would later have to be revised upwards and adjusting the numbers at the time. The main basis for these adjustments is the CBI's monthly surveys of industrial expectations. In other words, businessmen's guesses about the *future* are now incorporated into the official record of what has happened in the *past*.

Sadly, the adjustments have been overdone. Now, as more data comes in, the revisions are being made *downwards*. Instead of the earliest estimates being too pessimistic, they are too optimistic. Which, once again, worries the statisticians, although it probably matters to ministers rather less.

Incidentally, the first estimate for March's output suggests that output was 1.6 lower than a year ago. If it wasn't for the new tweaking system, the fall would have been about 3 per cent. Such news would have added to the Cabinet's recent panic. When the final revisions are made, it is likely that the fall in output will be recorded as 2.5 per cent. It just so happens, in as far as anything 'just so happens' in these circles, that the new way used to compile the figures is concealing the true weakness of the economy and shielding ministers from the full consequences of their policies.

THE MANIPULATION of the unemployment figures is better known and has been described in the *NS* (28 February) and elsewhere. Yet the cumulative effect of the 15 changes that have taken place since 1979 is probably less widely appreciated. It is to reduce the reported unemployment figures by at least 500,000. If the present system had been in operation in 1979, unemployment may well have been below one million when Labour left office. As things stand, it is now impossible to produce a reliable seven-year series of unemployment statistics on a consistent basis.

Nor are the *employment* figures much better. Last week the government announced that 'the employed labour force is estimated to have increased . . . by 985,000 between March 1983 . . . and December 1985'. Most of that increase, however, has come in self-employment — or, rather, in the government's guess at the number of self-employed people: as with the output figures, up-to-date data tends to be unreliable. If the number of people 'in employment' is considered, and 1979 taken as the date for comparison, there are 1.6 million *fewer* jobs around today than there were then.

Finally, prices. Last week the Institute for Fiscal Studies published a damning report on the Retail Prices Index, showing that it was a poor guide to average price changes and positively misleading when the needs of particular groups are considered. The IFS confirms what the Child Poverty Action Group and others have been saying for years: that inflation has been greater for the poor than for the rich. Between 1974 and 1982, the cost of living rose 8 per cent more for the poorest 10 per cent than for the richest 10 per cent. This had the effect of wiping out the 'real' increase in supplementary benefits.

It would be politically satisfying to conclude from this analysis that malign people have been cooking the books for partisan purposes. This is not in general true, although ministers inevitably put the best possible gloss on the detailed statistics.

The less satisfactory but more honest conclusion is that all economic figures should be treated with caution; and that, if the grim experiences of real people do not accord with optimistic noises being made by ministers, the most avid number-cruncher should conclude that real people are likely to be right — and 'real' statistics probably wrong. □

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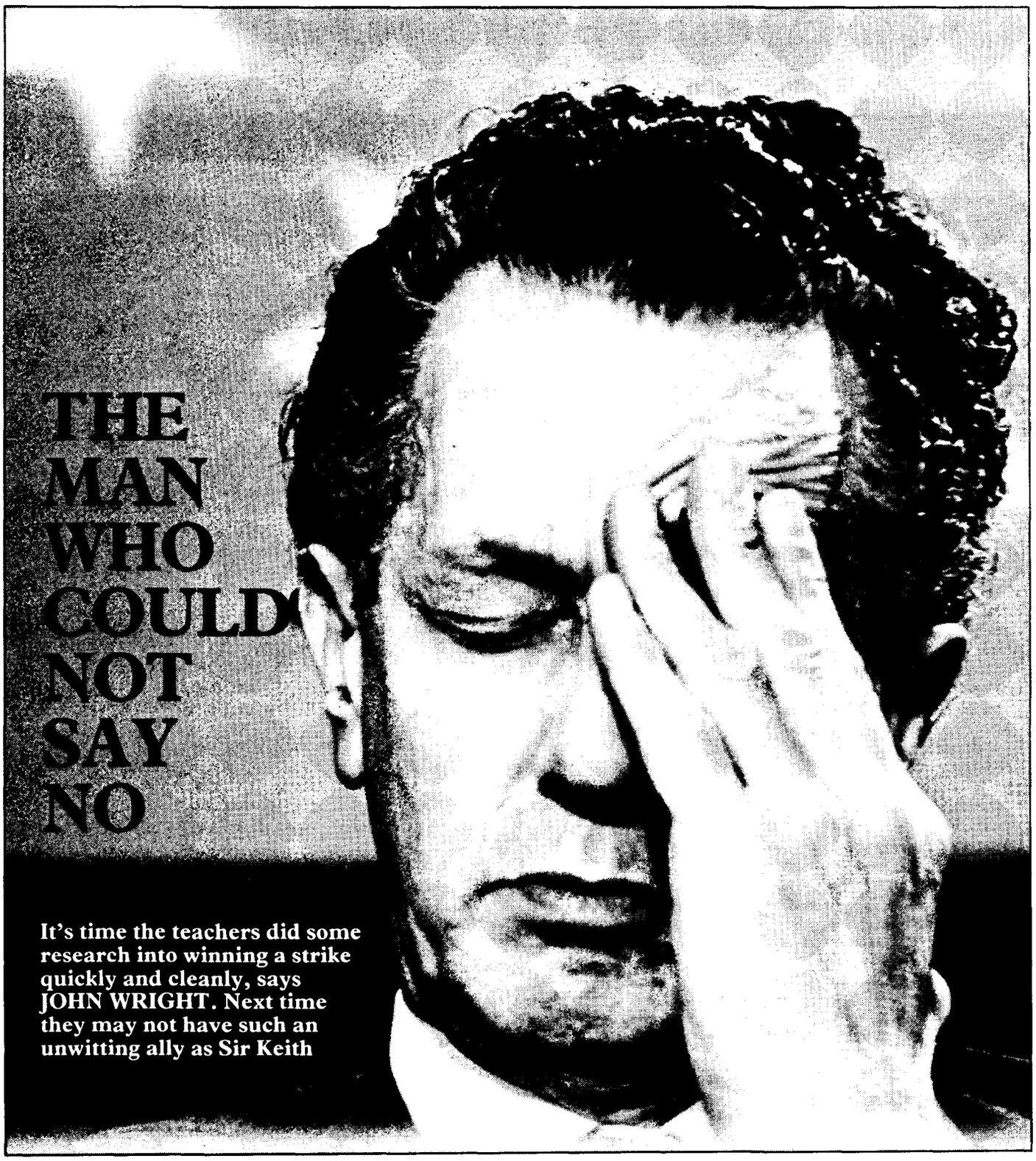

Chris Davies/Network

It's time the teachers did some research into winning a strike quickly and cleanly, says JOHN WRIGHT. Next time they may not have such an unwitting ally as Sir Keith

AT THE START of the teachers' dispute someone high up in CASE (the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education — which, perforce, passes as the organised parents' movement in Britain) mooted that a government which had just seen off Scargill and the miners would be able to gobble up the teachers' unions 'before breakfast'.

It is clear now that this was a bad misreading, not of the balance of forces as such, but of the nature of the war to be fought.

The miners' fight with the government was essentially physical, success depending on effective picketing of pitheads and blockading of ports and power stations. The miners were defeated physically mainly because the coal stocks were high to begin with and the government was able to mobilise and deploy a national army in the shape of the British police force.

The teachers and the government, on the other hand, have been engaged in psychological warfare. And the teachers have won a significant, if not yet total, victory. Well done. But how come? And what next?

At the beginning, in 1985, the teachers' demand was plain and simple and manifestly justified: more money. Teachers' take-home pay was worth about two thirds of what it had been ten years earlier. After four years on a student grant, a 22-year-old graduate, fully qualified to teach, would earn £6,252 a year. On the other hand, an 18-year-old police constable, who would not be trained until he started the job — and then trained on full pay — would already earn £6,708. And then there would be the £2,210 average rent allowance added on . . .

Meanwhile, 40,000 teachers qualified for

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free school meals for their children.

Despite the merit of the teachers' case, no one really expected the government to respond. Six intransigent years of cuts in public expenditure and refusing to deal with the unions had made it clear that talk was pointless. The legacy of the miners' dispute was not, then, as the CASE person thought, that industrial action would inevitably fail against a Thatcher government, but that nothing else was really worth trying. And by its own policies and behaviour the government had persuaded a large proportion of teachers (in the NAS/UWT as well as the traditionally more 'left' NUT) to this view. If we are counting, this was the first defeat for the government in its psychological war with the teachers. And it was self-inflicted.

As was, indeed, the government's second defeat. This came about as the direct result of Sir Keith Joseph's obsession with tinkering with the state education system: an odd parent governor more here, and odd LEA governor less there; a slight curb on headteachers' powers here, a slight increase there; replacing the dual examination system (CSE and GCE) with a single system here (GCSE); splitting it up into two tiers of ability there. Et cetera. Et cetera.

SO, PICTURE SIR KEITH, tinkering away, convinced that he's fine-tuning the carburettor of the state education system, while all the time refusing to spend a penny more on petrol, when along come the teachers insisting that he does just that.

Instead of simply saying 'No' and returning to his tinkering, he spots the chance for new tinkering. He says 'Well, yes, perhaps not this year but next . . . but only if you'll go along with a few schemes of mine' and he pulls out plans for modifying the conditions of service, altering the salary structure and appraising teachers' work.

As a negotiating ploy, this was dumb. It infuriated and further united the teachers (the NUT and NAS/UWT are now seriously talking about the need for a single teachers' union), and inevitably prolonged the dispute by making the nature of the agreement to be reached between government and unions infinitely more complex than a wages settlement, with its relatively straightforward haggle over percentages and back-dated periods.

So whereas government victory over the teachers depended on their being made the pariahs of society, moral outcasts for putting their own selfish interests before the welfare of their pupils, Sir Keith Joseph was increasingly presenting himself as the person against whom such a charge may be more appropriately levelled. For the sake of getting his tinkering done he was prolonging the dispute — and the disruption of children's schooling.

While whatever credit the government may have had with the parents to begin with slipped away, the teachers' unions were vying for it by repeatedly stressing the link between the government's attack on teachers' living standards with its run-down of the state education system in general. Canvassers everywhere in the recent round of elections reported that education had become a major political issue — and not to the government's advantage.

Today 72 per cent of our primary schools have mixed-aged classes over recommended size. Parents are contributing an average of 30 per cent of primary school capitation spending (books and equipment per head). 82 per cent of secondary schools report children sharing textbooks. 58 per cent of secondary schools ask parents directly to buy essentials. 84 per cent of secondary schools ask parents' associations to buy essentials.

In 10 years, education's share of public spending has dropped thumpingly from 13 per cent to 10 per cent. £200 million less is planned for education in the coming year and £250 million less the following year.

Linking their struggle with a broad attack on the government's education policy paid off for the teachers. And the NUT, at least, is committed to building on this success and extending the strategy. Next month will see the launch of what the union terms 'a full-blooded campaign in defence of state education', targeted at parents and other unions.

It's about time. CASE's 'Education in Crisis' leaflet is already in wide circulation and has been reproduced and distributed by the TGWU. Now the NUT is about to put its money where only its mouth has been. Each of the Union's 216,000 members will be asked to stump up a day's pay. This will establish a campaign kitty of well over half a million pounds.

The issues to be picked up range from salaries (of course) to expenditure on buildings, school-book provision, class size and under-achievement. The campaign title, not yet firmly decided upon, is likely to sound something like: 'Schools Need a New Deal'. Monitoring groups will be set up in each parliamentary constituency area and local councillors and sitting MPs will have their commitment to state education weighed and if found wanting widely exposed.

And teachers will be encouraged to talk to parents. As a spokesperson for the NUT commented: 'We've learned some difficult lessons in our relations with parents . . . We hadn't explained enough. Perhaps we hadn't done enough listening'.

This is vital, politically exciting and quite unprecedented work which the NUT is taking on, and especially important as a programme of public education in the run-up to a general election.

TWO WORRIES PERSIST, though. The first is that the teachers may not wish to take on board quite the full extent of their debt to Sir Keith. His steady loss of public regard has been their slowly accumulating gain. The government will not make the mistake of replacing him with another other-worldly tinkerer. Can't you hear Mrs T drilling his successor: 'And if they come back for more, remember this time it's 'NO', without the 'buts' and 'only ifs''.

And in addition to the worry of an effective adversary there is nagging anxiety about some of the forms which the teachers' action has taken. Industrial action by teachers, of course, is always fraught. There is no easy or sure way of appealing to parents for support when it is the parents who suffer most directly from its consequences. But what if the real failure of the unions is not so much a failure to explain the action to parents, but the very nature of that action?

So, for example, the withdrawal of voluntary activities such as mid-day supervision (which in some schools meant turfing children out onto the streets each dinner-time) and running the after-school drama, music and sports clubs (which has taken the spark of enjoyment out of many children's school-day) is hard to explain as industrial action; it seems mean and petty. I've heard parents express more anger against this kind of action than the straightforward half-day strike.

It might be of interest then, if the NUT could set aside a little of its half million plus campaign fund to finance a working group to examine alternatives to the kinds of action which have been engaged in this time round.

There may, for example, be lessons to be learned from teachers abroad. Jennie Hall, in an article in *Everywoman* last year, quoted this parental account of French teachers' industrial action: 'When the teachers took industrial action in France they made it much easier for us (i.e. parents) to support them. They said that they would come and look after our children but they wouldn't teach them. In return we, as parents, agreed to put all kinds of pressure on the education authority to come to a settlement and carry out their legal obligations to educate. The education authorities were very upset at the thought of all those teachers taking the kids on outings and talking to them about the need for industrial action!'

Perhaps a little market research by the NUT would reveal that good clean simple strike action would be better understood and supported by parents than months on end of withdrawal of 'voluntary' this and that and the other, including so-called 'good-will'. The NUT could also examine how, if it has to take direct action to defend public education, it could care for children affected. And perhaps it could undertake work with local parents' groups, and other trade unions, of a creative and subversive kind — meaning by that, of course, discussing with the children exactly what is happening and why. Perhaps, most subversive of all, instead of making children the passive victims of their action, the teachers could consider how the children could contribute to the fight to save our public education system. □

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OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

STEVE REDHEAD reports that the government's panic over football hooliganism has had little effect on what has been going on this year

FOR A CHANGE this year's European Cup Final was not contested by an English club team. Not because Canon League Champions Everton were unsuccessful in earlier rounds of the competition, but because UEFA had banned all English clubs from European matches. Instead, following the charges by Liverpool and other English fans at the Heysel stadium last May — leading to the deaths of 39 spectators as stadium walls collapsed — European hopefuls stayed home to contest the Screen Sport Super Cup. Early next season the Merseyside rivals will no doubt go through the motions in the final of this 'Mickey Mouse' trophy, far from the real action on the playing fields of Europe.

Although FIFA also imposed bans on English clubs playing anywhere abroad, the English national team *is* still free to play in the World Cup Finals in Mexico next month. Hoping against hope that there is no repeat of last year's tragedy at Heysel, or even the National Front's nasty little peep show in South America last summer, Football Association officials have been carefully plotting a route back on to the Continent as soon as the period of national penance will allow. They are now confident of avoiding more bad publicity which might jeopardise England's participation in the 1988 European Championship. Liverpool Chairman John Smith excepted, it is possible to detect over the past season a kind of reverse 'moral panic', a playing down of football's domestic troubles and a talking up of government measures to 'tackle' the problem.

It is now, 12 months on, quite easy to forget what all the fuss was about. The Thatcher government has encountered new 'enemies within' — the printworkers, dole scroungers, even disloyal Cabinet Ministers — and the 'war' on football hooligans announced after the televised highlights of Millwall's invasion of Kenilworth Road, Luton in March 1985 has faded from public view. Those incidents which *have* received widespread news coverage over the last season largely took place *before* Heysel: Kevin Whitton's trial and the police search for the notorious 'Fat Man' involved offences from the 1984-1985 season. As a result even the better soccer journalists have succumbed to their own propaganda. For instance, David Lacey of the *Guardian* wrote recently that:

> All in all it has been a good season with events on the field providing just the fillip that was needed after tragedies of Bradford and Brussels and the outbreaks of spectator violence that cast gloom over the English game for much of last year.

There is, of course, no need for complacency, he added. Annual attendances have fallen from 24.6 million to around 16.4 million since 1980. 'The World Cup may reveal English football's lack of real quality.'

THE 1985-1986 SOCCER season has indeed *appeared* to be relatively trouble free. But there is no hard evidence whatsoever to suggest that the government's 'emergency' measures have succeeded in curbing soccer hooliganism. Reliance on police arrest figures at football matches, prominent in news bulletins this season, is dangerous ground (figures for ejections from stadia are often more reliable signs of trouble matches). If anything, fewer arrests at matches merely serve to confirm that football violence is increasingly conducted away from the terraces.

Known pubs or the seating areas of football grounds are current favourites. The publicity given to the 'General' Muranyi case highlighted dominant patterns of soccer's style wars: military type manoeuvres, ambushes, designer clothes. One incident which did reach the status of national news this year was the aerosol attack — starting to rival the ubiquitous Stanley knife sortie — on Manchester United's players as they left the team coach to play Liverpool at Anfield.

Coming as it did shortly after the return of football to 'live' TV after months of dispute there was controversy about how much media attention should be given to it. Kenny Dalglish, Liverpool's player-manager, was quoted as saying that he didn't think that the item should be blown up out of all proportion but others — notably United officials — were more vitriolic. Sure enough there was considerable coverage on the 6.30pm news and in the next morning's papers.

What did not hit the headlines, though *The Times* did report it, was the attack on a Manchester fan sitting in the stands during the match itself which involved several 'well-dressed young men in their twenties' who calmly got up from their seats, viciously set about the 'enemy' and equally calmly sat down again, all without police intervention. Real, Clockwork Orange style mayhem.

Unusually — since abstinence is fast

Once more into the terraces, once more . . . *Camera Press*

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becoming fashionable — this trouble was attributed to drink. The government's 'quickie' law, the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act, 1985, passed without opposition at the height of the post-Heysel hysteria, has been held to be so successful that amendments are to be introduced to relax the ban on alcohol in executive and directors boxes — 'more booze to the toffs' as Eldon Griffiths, parliamentary spokesman for the Police Federation, put it. But at the same time changes to the Public Order Bill will make it illegal to consume alcohol in buses or cars carrying more than two people on their way to football matches; since many fans travel by minibus or private car precisely to evade the ever increasing surveillance of trains and coaches, there are likely to be hostile confrontations as police try to enforce the provision.

Coupled with other parts of the new legislation, especially the introduction of the catch-all offence of 'disorderly conduct', the civil liberties of ordinary football fans will be severely curtailed. Further, the measures are woefully ill-conceived as a 'battle' plan: as one fan boasted to *The Times*: 'The government might stop a repeat of Brussels but they won't stop the fighting outside the grounds and in the cities'.

What can be done? It is one thing to blame the Tory government for its orchestrated panic over hooliganism at football matches and for reversal when the going got tough and it became convenient to look in the other direction. But Labour presided over the nation's development of 'modern' football hooliganism in the 1960s. It then responded to the 1970s variety by, under Denis Howell, caging in the terrace fans with such militaristic precision that the scene was well set for today's self-styled 'barmy armies' to prove their manhood further and further from football stadia, where at least containment was a realistic aim.

Those looking for progressive reform therefore need urgently to develop a more coherent, popular leisure policy as well as a response to crime in the cities. We need to rid ourselves of debilitating myths about the 'glorious' past of the 'people's game' and the nation's exploits on the international stage. Professional football in Britain in the 1980s is an entrepreneur's paradise, ripe for a quick killing before the industry gurgles down the plughole. It is a prime example of Thatcherism in practice and who can be surprised if the country's male youth catch something of its narrow, mean and brutish spirit, particularly the xenophobia?

An overhaul of football's governing bodies is long overdue — let alone a regulation of the game's financial set-up — and a more modest assessment of British football's place in the world would go a long way towards channelling national pride into more productive endeavours. The Heysel tragedy should not be allowed to slip out of popular memory so easily; the rehabilitation of soccer in England will take more than a single season, and the appointment of a Labour voting team manager, but it's a task worth undertaking.□

Steve Redhead is the author of Sing When You're Winning: The Last Football Book *to be published by Pluto Press in October.*

TEST BAN

WE DON'T SEEM TO BE TRYING

The US (and British) governments do not really want a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban treaty. Time is running out, says JEREMY LEGGETT

IN SHUNNING CALLS for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty — not just calls from Mr Gorbachev, but also the United Nations, and even the US House of Representatives — Mr Reagan and Mrs Thatcher are in the process of wasting a major opportunity to begin a wind down from the nuclear arms race. Many scientists now credit the governments in Washington and London with fundamental lack of integrity in what they say about a test ban.

President Reagan's Administration argues currently that testing is needed to ensure that existing bombs in the US stockpile are not turning into damp squibs. An American weapons designer, Dr Richard Garwin, has publicly ridiculed this argument; ex-US weapons design chief Glenn Seaborg has said that 'shelflife' tests were never done in the 1960s and 1970s.

Physicists in British universities also dismiss the argument as a smokescreen. The truth is that the Reagan Administration wants to continue testing in order to develop *new* systems, including the nuclear pump for the X-ray laser, which figures so centrally in the Star Wars dream.

The Reagan Administration used to argue until fairly recently that difficulties over verification of Soviet compliance with a comprehensive test ban was an obstacle to re-opened negotiations. A top scientist from one of the two US weapons laboratories, Dr Hugh de Witt, said of this argument in a recent letter to Scientists Against Nuclear Arms: '. . . the arguments in favor of continued nuclear testing put forward by the weapons labs and the Reagan people are largely spurious. Rationales shift as various arguments presented by the lab people get discredited. That is why verification is no longer emphasised in this country . . . too many good seismologists have discredited the claims of the Reaganites . . .'

Why does he say this? Because academic scientists in the US who have worked on the problem outside the weapons lab environment accept (and have so testified to the House of Representatives) that the technical details of verification can be addressed with existing technology so as to enable us confidently to monitor Soviet compliance.

Mrs Thatcher's government *still* argues that problems of verification are so great as to stop Britain even asking for re-opened test ban negotiations — much as we pretend to want them. Ministry of Defence scientists argue this case in Document CD/610, submitted to the UN Conference on Disarmament last July.

This document is the technical basis for UK policy. It has constantly been referred to by Ministers, in both Houses, in support of the UK stance. But it has been described by one of the world's top seismologists, the American Professor L. Sykes, as follows: '. . . Much of the document reads as though it was prepared 15 years ago with a few additions being made here and there . . .'.

The entire basis for the pessimistic picture spelled out in the document is that it may be feasible for the Soviets to detonate test explosions in huge chambers deep underground. Consider the opinion of another weapons lab scientist on this. Dr J. C. Mark, former head of the Theoretical Division of the Los Alamos Laboratory, says:

> . . . In principle, a big hole could cut the signals from some explosion down to the size of an explosion ten or a few tens of times smaller. There is probably nothing wrong with the *theory* (my emphasis: the only test has been at well under one kiloton), but it offers a perfectly delightful array of difficulties. Of course, the commotion associated with construction of a large hole, or even from preparing an existing hole for use, would provide a number of potentially observable effects. These might escape detection, or they might not; but it would certainly be a very troubling undertaking to ensure that they would . . .'

EVEN WERE CAVITY coupling to prove a feasible way of concealing militarily-significant explosion levels (5-15 kilotons) *nobody* who has studied verification technology adopts a position as pessimistic as that of the anonymous officials who drafted CD/610. In the event of a test ban treaty coming to fruition, Mr Gorbachev has conceded that seismic monitoring stations would be allowed inside the Soviet Union.

The numbers of such monitors which would be needed for confident verification (ie monitoring down to 1 kiloton) vary according to who you ask. In the US, 'optimists' in the scientific community say 15 to 25. A 'pessimist', the anti-test ban weapons lab scientist Roger Batzel, Director of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, said in testimony to the House of Representatives: . . . 'more than 30'. The bottom line is that there must be, even for the anonymous MoD experts, a number of stations which would ensure compliance.

Why does the British government, then, not negotiate a high enough number of stations to guarantee compliance: we may just find the Russians amenable. As Olof Palme observed to one of our colleagues in Sweden the week before he died, monitoring stations cost so little compared to new missiles.

If we insist on cast-iron guarantees ahead of even sitting down to negotiate, we shall never reduce the threat of nuclear war. This is an argument deployed not only by supporters of the CND and/or Freeze campaigns. It was made forcibly in a document circulated by the Washington-based Center for Defense

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Information, an organisation run by very senior ex-military officers, who now believe that the 'modernisation' of nuclear weapons stocks cannot make the world safer.

The fact that the Russians accepted internal monitoring stations during the last negotiations (1977-1980) was at the time an important advance. We do not know how much further they might have gone then, if negotiations had gone on beyond the invasion of Afghanistan and President Reagan's election.

SEISMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS apart, Mrs Thatcher's government says that there are many technical limitations to satellite monitoring. Do they mean technical, or do they mean fiscal? For we know that US 'close-look' (KH8) military satellites are capable of resolving objects down to 4 inches across. This means that they can completely identify any object 48 inches across. Surely a serious attempt to deploy large numbers of such satellites by the US would offer a substantial additional gauntlet for the Soviets to run, were they to consider a secret testing programme, quite apart from the seismological one?. The cost of such a deployment would be substantially smaller (and infinitely more wise) than the enormous sums projected for Star Wars research?

Critics of the test ban invariably fail to mention a central point in the verification debate. They seem to infer that we need cast-iron, foolproof, verification. Yet western negotiators never operated on this assumption in the years 1977-1980.

The whole point is that you only need to be able to *deter* the Soviets from thoughts of cheating. Would they risk a low-yield test of dubious military advantage, even if we could be only 90 per cent certain of detecting it? And, more particularly, would they do so for the *series* of tests that would be necessary for developing a new weapons system?

Two things are clear to me from the way in which the UN Conference on Disarmament has been going. First, the Americans and British stand alone before a world (with the exception of France) which unanimously wants a stop to nuclear weapons tests. I witnessed American and British officials block an initiative on the test ban on 27 March, when we vetoed a draft mandate for a Committee to begin work negotiating the practicalities of installing a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Even usually strong allies such as Australia and New Zealand were disgusted with us.

Second, and more pressing still, my discussions with diplomats from western, non-aligned *and* eastern bloc states, brought home to me forcefully that Mr Gorbachev, too, has his hawkish officials, just as we do in Washington and London. He has been holding them at bay.

One of my abiding impressions was of the despairing cynicism of the Russian diplomats. Time is running out for all of us. Do we really, despite all the favourable portents of the Geneva summit, wish to continue testing and developing new nuclear weapons? □

Dr Jeremy Leggett is a Lecturer in Earth Sciences at Imperial College and is on the National Co-ordinating Committee of Scientists Against Nuclear Arms.

THE NEW GYPSIES

STONEHENGE'S ROUGH MAGIC

TIM MALYON on the dispossessed v the secure

THE HIGH COURT injunction this week (20 May) forbidding 45 named defendants and all who might 'aid and abet' them entry onto National Trust, English Heritage, Ministry of Defence, Amesbury Town Council and various private landholdings around Stonehenge means it's open season against travellers around Stonehenge. Visiting the *Rainbow Village* camp near Street — 45 adults and 20 children who have survived numerous evictions since being thrown off Molesworth last year — I was shown a traveller's car with all its windows and dashboard glass smashed, its seats slashed the previous night. 'In the last nine months we've had three vehicles petrol-bombed,' commented Sid Rawle, camp member and defendant in the High Court injunction.

By a field near Sparkford, where those evicted from Stonehenge are camped, I overhead 'rambo' talk amongst a group of locals, of shotguns and spraying chicken shit. They boasted of stealing a spade from a traveller digging latrines, yet complained that travellers are all thieves. 'The area contains a hard core of reactionary people, a minority who would be willing to take vigilante action,' asserted Salisbury Labour district councillor Phil Mayhew. Local Tory MP Robert Key has not gone this far, but both Mayhew and Rawle are incensed by his recent remarks warning of 'an explosion of hepatitis and AIDS' associated with the 'evil' festival. 'It's the first stage in a process of dehumanisation,' Rawle told me. 'The fuse is very short now, and the vigilantes will feel empowered to physically attack and very possibly kill travelling people.'

The situation is exacerbated by press coverage which persists in referring to any group of long-haired people in vehicles as 'the convoy' under banner 'hippy terror' headlines. Stories both true and false of theft and violence by individual travellers thus stick to the whole culture, which itself is growing fast. As unemployment increases, housing becomes more scarce, inner cities more depressed, and squatting more hazardous, so growing numbers take to the road. A few hundred pounds purchases a home; a group of vehicles affords some security.

Such groups now exist throughout the country, some better organised than others. After a winter of evictions, around the West Country in particular, some councils are starting to recognise the need for licensed sites. Councillors from seven West Country counties met in Taunton recently to discuss the problem, its first official acknowledgement.

Stonehenge has become the focal point for this travellers' culture, a place for meeting, trading, having a party and perhaps worshipping in the stones. It's also the only major free rural festival, an escape from inner city tensions for those who can't afford commercial events. This year, carnival groups of travellers have plans to converge peacefully on the area from the West, South, London and East Anglia, starting out on 1 June, arriving around Salisbury on 14 June. They aim to fill up vehicles with some among the 30,000 punters who attended Stonehenge in 1984 over the solstice.

Money has been raised through winter benefit concerts. £1,000 has been reserved for use on a site after 14 June, the rest is being spent on posters, leaflets and a legal briefing. A festival magazine, *Festival Eye*, is being professionally produced. *View Over Atlantis* author John Mitchell has published a Stonehenge pamphlet. *The Pleasure Tendency* in Leeds has been sending out be-sensitive-to-the-environment leaflets.

On 14 May Festival Welfare Services chair Don Aitken and festival representatives met with assistant chief constable Cook — in charge of this year's operation — and chief supt. Denning and chief inspector Woodman near Amesbury. 'They clearly accepted there's going to be a festival this year,' Aitken reports, 'but explained they would stop obvious festival people at the county boundary, warning them of the injunctions. They'll keep people in vehicles five miles away from Stonehenge, people on foot one mile away, and will defend the areas under injunction.' Last year's policing cost Wiltshire over £1 million. This year £500,000 has been set aside.

As yet, no site is available. Britain's two largest landowners, the Ministry of Defence and the National Trust, own most of the surrounding land. The MOD decision last winter to reject a joint National Trust/English Heritage request for MOD festival land was taken 'at Secretary of State level,' according to MOD press officer John Turner. Cruise convoys regularly train north of Stonehenge and pass by the monument.

The National Trust for its part has never fully explained what damage a well-organised festival would do to its ground. Former farm manager Ivor Muggleton remembers the 1984 festival site being regularly ploughed up to the early '70s. 'Those big heavy discs went in really deep,' he told me. 'I had them on test from Massey Ferguson. The 90 horse power tractor had a job to pull them.' This year, moreover, Glastonbury CND festival organiser Michael Eavis informed NT regional director, John Cripwell that he would clear up any NT festival site. The offer was never officially passed on to head office.

Handling the Stonehenge problem is beyond the remit either of National Trust or English Heritage. Labour Home Affairs spokesperson Clive Soley is critical of the government 'for doing nothing, as usual, and leaving the problem to the police. It will then express shock and horror if violence does occur.' From now until the 21 June solstice, Wiltshire will be a public order tinder-box, where friction between red-neck vigilantes, festival people and the police could flare up at any time. Only a legal festival site could dampen the danger. □

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MEDIA

Fleet Street mob pot Botham

FRANCIS WHEEN

IAN BOTHAM will not be playing cricket for England in the one-day international matches this weekend. He is unlikely to play in the first Test against India, starting on 5 June. And there is speculation that he may never be allowed to play for England again.

One talks often about the power of the press, but there has seldom been quite such a straightforward and distasteful example. For the cause of Botham's downfall was a single newspaper article, which appeared in last week's issue of the *Mail on Sunday* under his name (though doubtless it was tickled up by an unseen army of hacks, subs and lawyers). 'BOTHAM: I *DID* TAKE POT!' screamed the headline. The strapline added: 'EXCLUSIVE: England cricket star confesses'.

The story was not some unsolicited revelation but part of the settlement of Botham's long-running legal tussle with the *Mail on Sunday*. It read like a 'confession' at one of the old Soviet show-trials. Although it was spread over three pages, its essence was expressed in one sentence: 'The fact is that I have, at various times in the past, smoked pot.'

How 'exclusive' was this disclosure? In a sanctimonious leader, the *Mail on Sunday* claimed that Botham's statement 'frankly admits that which he has never dared say before'. This line seems to have been accepted by the rest of Fleet Street. 'At last Ian Botham has had the guts to tell the truth,' the *Mirror* pronounced in a 'Sport Comment' on Monday. 'For months he has lied and evaded, denied the facts and abused those who tried to expose them. Now he has come clean.' The *Mirror*'s own grasp of the facts was such that it claimed he had admitted to having smoked marijuana 'on the tour of New Zealand'. He had done nothing of the sort: all he had said was that he had smoked 'pot' (as the press quaintly calls it) in his younger days.

What, you might ask though Fleet Street doesn't, is so surprising about that? In February last year Botham was fined £100 by Humberside magistrates for possessing 2.2 grams of cannabis. Since then he has made no secret of the fact that he has smoked cannabis in the past. For instance, on 14 April this year he was interviewed by Frank Bough on the BBC's *Breakfast Time*, denying a former beauty queen's allegation that he had taken part in 'sex and cocaine romps' in the Caribbean.

> Well, as I said in the court there, I said yes, I have smoked cannabis and it was a long time ago and . . . is that . . . you know, I came up in the period of the '60s and '70s and there was a lot of it around and I tried it.

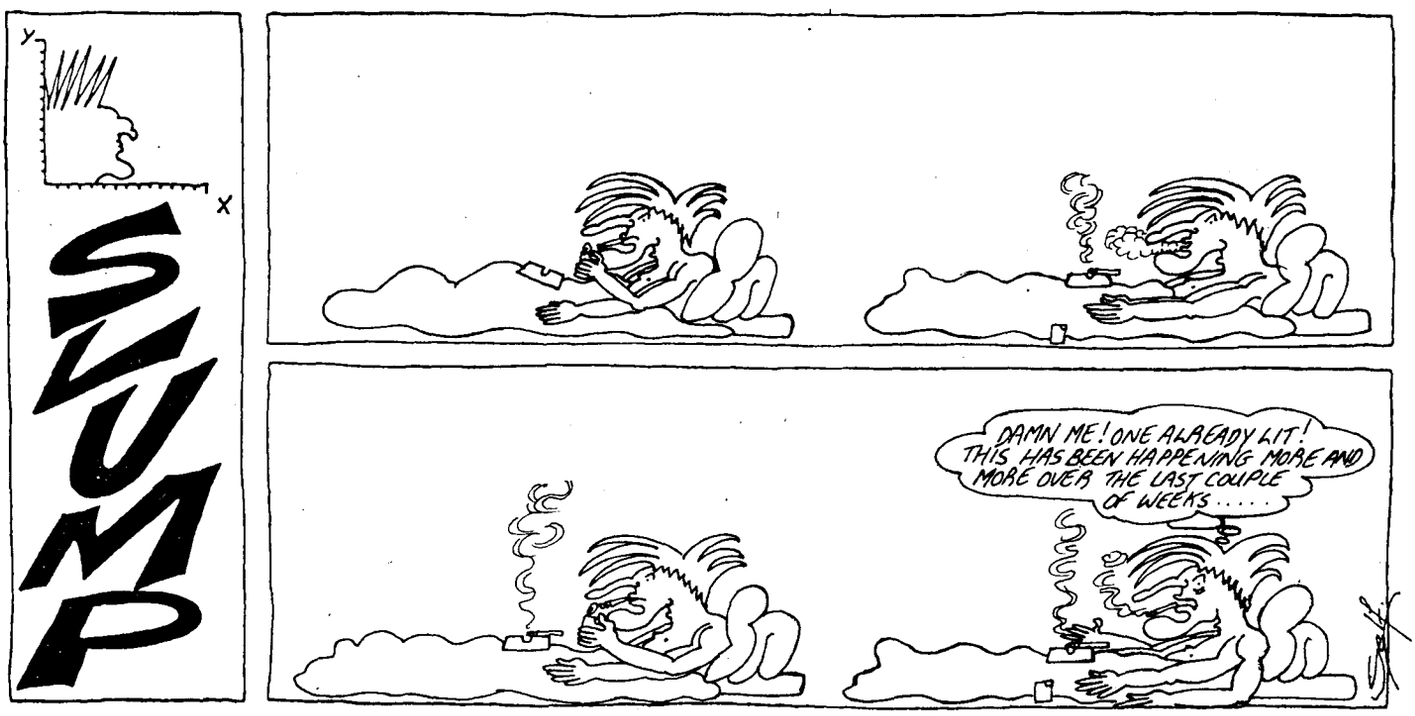
As far as I can discover, not a single paper considered this newsworthy enough to report the next day. Yet now that the same story has been served up again, warmed up and garnished with huge headlines, the matter is considered so important that the tabloids go beserk and the Test and County Cricket Board — as spavined a collection of deadbeats as you could meet in a day's march — sacks Botham from the England team and puts him 'on trial'.

I doubt if more than a few people in Britain will be immensely shocked by the news that Botham has smoked the odd joint. For Fleet Street, however, the story is an excuse to pursue two favourite obsessions: abusing Ian Botham and expressing moral outrage at drug-taking.

Fleet Street's behaviour towards Botham in recent months has been despicable. As Ian Wooldridge wrote in the *Daily Mail* a couple of months ago, 'debunking heroes is a particularly nasty English habit'. But Wooldridge himself is as bad an offender as any. In the same article, written from Port of Spain, he described Botham as wearing 'the disgruntled scowl of the street gang bully who has met his match'. Most coverage of the Caribbean tour was on the same level.

As for drugs, Fleet Street's attitude is a compound of ignorance and holier-than-thou posturing. In its leader last week, the *Mail on Sunday* referred to 'the hypocrisy which surrounds all discussion of drug-taking in this country'. True enough: I can think of someone on the *Mail on Sunday* (no names, no libel writs) who has used drugs that Botham has probably never heard of. But this, I need hardly say, was not what the paper meant. 'Society as a whole,' the leader continued, 'has been quite wicked in its forbearance of what it pleases to regard as "soft drugs" . . . We have reaped the harvest of that so-called liberal thinking of the Sixties and the Seventies'.

And that is the heart of the matter. 'Social problem' stories are tricky for right-wing papers: you can hardly run a piece on homelessness or poverty without admitting, even if only by implication, that the government might be at fault. With drugs, however, you can present the culprit as the pusher, or the 'role model' such as Botham, rather than HMG. And, as a bonus, you can also blame the 'liberal thinkers' of the Sixties. Poor old Botham is, to use the *Mail*'s language, reaping the harvest of Fleet Street's Thatcherite thinking.



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DIARY

Alison Hennegan

Cambridge

This time, invited to sit astride the roof of Stratford's new Swan Theatre so that I could have the best view of its exquisite silver weather-vanes being lowered into place, I chickened. Cowering ignominiously on a nice safe flat bit some 20 feet below, I reminded myself sternly that only last summer I'd climbed to the top of this very building by the one route then available: via the ladders, planks and scaffolding swathing its outside walls.

The architect had been so casual about it. 'Coming up top?', he'd asked in tones so serene that a refusal would have seemed vulgarly melodramatic. (But sometimes, as I observed bitterly and often to myself during the next few sweating minutes, the flight from vulgarity can carry you too far . . .)

○

I wasn't a quick climber, nor a graceful one. My construction helmet felt too small, my feet too big, the rungs too narrow. Below me Stratford and the Avon seemed both too far (60 feet?) and too close (about three seconds by the most direct route). I wasn't quiet, either, according to the architect who said he could hear me wittering on all the way to the top: 'I'm not *frightened*, I'm *not* frightened.' (Obviously I lie a lot, too. But I did it, right up to the nasty tricky overhang where he was waiting for me. 'Get yourself over any way you like,' he said encouragingly. 'For[illegible]ds, backwards, sideways, it doesn't matter. Take your time. But I won't help you. I think it's deeply sexist to help women on building sites.'

○

For a moment I almost became a Liberal Humanist ('But in the *end*, I always think that people are just, well, *people*, don't you?'). Scanning his face for tell-tale signs of smirk and finding none I absolved him of malice. Like a particularly clumsy hedgehog bungling a forward roll, I tumbled over the parapet and, as I got up off the ground and dusted myself down, I reminded myself, firmly, that it's always good to discover anti-sexism wherever you may encounter it.

○

The workers swarming over the site behaved impeccably: no sniggers, no sneers, no unsolicited opinions. Grins seemed genuinely friendly, not superior. It is, said the architect, one of the most noticeable changes in the building industry over the past twenty years. Women on site now arouse little comment. It was all very different when a woman colleague of his began her career. Stuck for years with bungalows and low ceilinged two-storey buildings, she rebelled and successfully demanded something bigger. Her presence on site initially involved a barrage of sexist jokes and comments. But she rapidly developed her own techniques. The troublesome found their previous two days' work condemned. She had surprisingly little difficulty after that.

○

There on the half-built Swan, architect and builders unrolled for me an unaccustomed map of England as I heard the roll-call of the counties which had yielded their timber and stones for the new theatre. Beneath the roads and fields exists this other, much older England, of quarries, mines, seams and veins, some almost exhausted, others seemingly inexhaustible. Listening as the masons and carpenters talked, shrewdly, affectionately, appraisingly, the map sprang vividly to life. Crafts were mapped, too, as well as materials. The lead which will roof the Swan is still made in the mediaeval manner, over beds of hot sand. I listened avidly, almost entirely because I was genuinely interested but also, more ignobly and just a tiny bit, because the more we talked the longer it would be before we had to go down again . . .

○

'Going back the way you came?', he enquired casually. '*Is* there another way?', I asked, trying not to sound too eager. 'No, not really', he admitted. He gave me a couple of useful tips (if I held my arms *this* way, I could only fall two feet; if I held my arms *that* way, I could only fall fifteen), told me not to look down, then said cheerily, 'Well, see you at the bottom.' Reunited minutes later, he looked at me speculatively and said: 'It's strange, you know. I quite often ask people if they'd like to go up top, but very few accept.' Now he tells me.

○

But all that was back in the brave dog days of last summer. Now, watching as the crane swings over, lowering the first of the vanes, I find myself suddenly craven. It's cold and windy this morning. Only a few days before, at the height of the gales, I'd been standing in the market place here in Cambridge, looking across to the eerie sight of ill-secured planks on the scaffolding round King's Chapel being snatched up by the winds and flung high above the highest pinnacles. Caught in air currents, they'd drifted lazily and silently above the spires before suddenly spinning down to shatter on the pavements of King's Parade. The memory keeps me firmly where I am.

Not so the steeplejack who, higher than all of us, leans at a sickening angle out over nothing but a lot of air and grabs the vane. As far as I can see, his balance is secured solely by the big toe of his right foot.

○

Back on the ground once more, conversation becomes general, in a rather specialised way ('Have you heard the one about a steeplejack, a silversmith, an architect and a master mason?'). Soon the steeplejack waxes passionate about one of his favourite spires. Someone, it seems, suggested to him recently, that she was unsafe. He's outraged and defends her with all the ardour of a man defending the Honour of the woman he loves. He's known and tended her now for thirty years. She sways a little, naturally, shifts a bit, of course. What else can you expect after all she's been through? But she's sound, the tell-tales (enchanting term) prove that. She's a fine, fine spire and no one shall ever persuade him otherwise.

○

A week ago, from the middle of Row F, I gazed proprietorially around the inside of the finished theatre. She's everything they say: beautiful, terrifying, demanding, exciting.

But, oh my dears, if you'd only *seen* her last summer . . .!

ROGER WODDIS

Terminal case

'South Africa has declared war against peace . . . it is giving its answer in the most brutally orchestrated manner to our effort to end apartheid through peaceful means.' — Sir Sonny Ramphal, Commonwealth Secretary-General

To seek an end by peaceful means,
With nurses putting round the screens
Before the patient breathes his last,
And hoping an elastoplast
Would be enough to do the trick
May be described by some as sick.

And diagnosing a disease,
Which now must end in obsequies,
As minor or a sign of health
Embarrasses the Commonwealth,
And hardly leaves the world assured
That such a cancer can be cured.

When life expectancy is short,
It's kind to cut the life-support
And sever, if the system stinks,
'Important economic links.'
Only a howling hypocrite
Will now refuse to sanction it.

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General Obasanjo contemplating peaceful retirement rearing chickens

Camera Press

EMINENTLY RIGHT FOR WHITE RULE

Set on becoming the first African Secretary General of the UN, General Obasanjo's support may be too conservative for his ambitions reports SUZANNE CRONJE

NAILED TO THE ENTRANCE of General Obasanjo's farm near Lagos is a keep-out notice, addressed to 'mischief makers, robbers, pressmen and women'. Until he stepped into the international limelight by becoming a co-chairman of the EPG, Nigeria's former military leader spent his retirement raising poultry and growing crops.

At least this was the impression he tried to convey in his rare encounters with the Nigerian press. Newspapers misrepresent him, he complains: 'I do not give interviews. I am a farmer, and a good farmer should only listen and not talk'.

Abroad, Obasanjo is less reticent, particularly in the vicinity of the UN headquarters in New York, where he has been quite forthcoming when asked any question by the media. But this is part of a bid for nomination as UN Secretary General. Perez de Cuellar, the present incumbent, is due to retire at the end of this year. For Obasanjo there are few other ambitions left: he was Nigerian President for three years until 1979, when he engineered the transfer of power from a military to a civilian government — and he is immensely rich.

South Africa's attack on three of its neighbours on Monday, despite the presence in the country of the EPG, was, of course strictly predictable: President Botha was in urgent need of a 'Falklands factor' (see *NS* 21 March). The raid scuttled the EPG mission, at least temporarily, but it may have saved Obasanjo's reputation. Initially, Lagos had turned down the invitation to participate in the EPG. The Babangida government, which had taken over only a few weeks earlier, was still divided on foreign policy.

But after intercession by Robert Mugabe, Obasanjo was nominated to the EPG, despite hostile public reactions in Nigeria to his role as 'Mrs Thatcher's stooge'. It was feared that the EPG was nothing but a British ruse to postpone sanctions and to rob the ANC of its impetus.

These fears were expressed at the All-Nigeria Foreign Policy Conference held in Kuru, Nigeria, last month, which was called by General Babangida to consider the direction to be taken by his government in international affairs over the next four years. Obasanjo had opposed this public consultation, and did not attend it.

The meeting resolved by acclamation that Nigeria should leave the Commonwealth. While the recommendation is not binding on Babangida, he has in the past accepted such popular verdicts — for instance, the decision to break off negotiations with the IMF.

After Kuru, the Foreign Ministry in Lagos issued a statement which called for the total dismantling of apartheid and universal, mandatory sanctions — rather than the selective measures recommended by the Commonwealth. At the beginning of this

The EPG

The Eminent Persons Group was formed after the Bahamas Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting last October in the Bahamas, to promote a peaceful move away from apartheid. The summit called on Pretoria to facilitate this by undertaking a number of measures, including the release of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and the legalisation of the ANC. The EPG was given until this June to report whether satisfactory progress on these issues had been made. If not, Commonwealth members, but not Britain, proposed to consider a list of selective sanctions. Margaret Thatcher tried to neuter the EPG by putting Sir Geoffrey Howe in charge of it, but this was unacceptable to the frontline states. Its eventual membership became:

Australia — **Malcolm Fraser**
Nigeria — **General Obasanjo** } co-chairs
Barbados — **Dame Nita Barrow**
UK — **Lord (Anthony) Barber**
Tanzania — **John Malecela**
Canada — **Archbishop Scott**
India — **Swaran Singh**

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month, the Chief of General Staff, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, Babangida's number two, stressed that Nigeria was not participating as a government in the work of the EPG and that Obasanjo's membership was on an individual basis.

BUT OBASANJO is not ready to change tack. Even the South African raids are unlikely to have deterred him from playing a southern African role.

Western publicity has already endowed him with unusual qualifications for solving ethnic problems. 'A man in touch with the realities of Africa' — this is how South Africa's Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, described him. This reputation depends on Nigeria's 1979 constitution, drawn up when Obasanjo was Head of State to reflect his country's ethnic diversity and to protect minority interests.

The new framework emphasised Nigeria's 'federal character'. It also ensured that the traditional ruling elite remained in the saddle and that politics were confined to the rivalries between ethnic alliances, discouraging the spread of wider ideological considerations. The two coups since 1979, and the current search for an alternative system, are a verdict on the institutionalising of tribal divisions. But Obasanjo blames this failure on the leaders and not his system, ignoring the fact that the politicians were elected strictly in accordance with the 'federal character' demanded by the constitution. Asked recently about his achievements as Head of State, he replied simply: 'Everything I did was successful'. This interview took place at the UN and not in Lagos.

In any case, Nigeria's problems are the very opposite of South Africa's and cannot serve as a model. In Nigeria, the preoccupation with tribal politics has generated a lack of cohesion or common purpose. In South Africa, the white minority government has tried to entrench Black tribal and other ethnic divisions, but the vast majority of people, including a growing number of whites, are united in a common purpose, to get rid of apartheid.

Since apartheid has for so long been shored up by capitalist interests, the Black militants in the townships have adopted anti-capitalist battle cries. When white minority rule goes, South Africa might well opt for a non-capitalist system. The population is much more familiar with the existence of ideological options than is the bulk of Nigerians. That is what Pretoria's Western allies fear and what President Botha refers to as 'revolutionary communism'.

Obasanjo, whose wealth is based on the ownership of land, does not sympathise with revolutionary ideas. His Western supporters hoped he would pressure the ANC into negotiating a system with provisions to protect minorities, in other words white privilege and white control over the economy.

Meanwhile, the campaign for Obasanjo's nomination to the UN Secretary Generalship continues. The office has been held by candidates from all the other continents. Now it is Africa's turn. It was Africa's turn already in 1981, when the former Tanzanian Foreign Minister, Salim A. Salim, was Africa's choice. He was blocked by the West because of Tanzania's radical reputation.

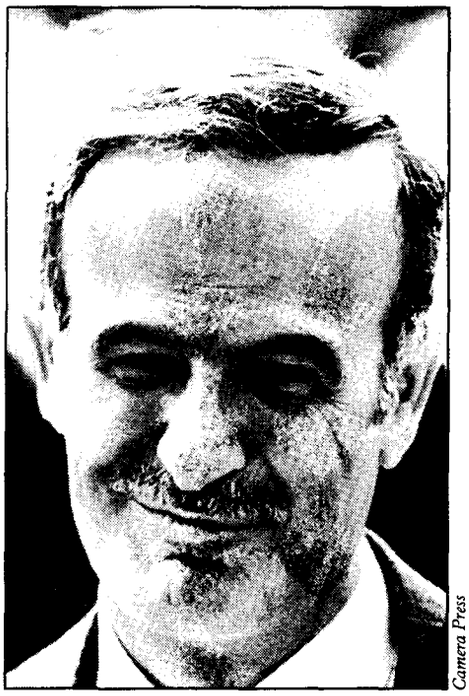
Obasanjo would not face this difficulty, judging by American press reports. His membership of the Inter-Action Council, a pressure group of world leaders now out of office, cemented his relationship with Malcolm Fraser, the Australian ex-Prime Minister, who is the other EPG co-Chairman. It also brought him the promise of support from James Callaghan and Helmut Schmidt, if he becomes the African candidate for the UN office.

The Nigerian government will presumably endorse him; as one of his admirers said, it would save the expenses of employing a commercial agency to promote Nigeria on the world stage. But to stand as Secretary General he needs the support of the Organization of African Unity, which works through the Africa group at the UN. An unspoken pre-condition for OAU backing is the confidence of southern African liberation movements and, in this context, Obasanjo's performance within the EPG could be a deciding factor.□

CONTROL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

WAR OF NERVES AGAINST ASSAD

Air strikes against Syria — should President Assad conveniently die — are attractive options to both the US and Israel reports CLAUDIA WRIGHT



Camera Press

President Hafaz Al-Assad: new interest in his heart

Washington

THE WAR OF NERVES by Israel and the United States against Syria and the tension itself helps feed the appetite both Israeli and American officials have for 'action'; for not appearing, as President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz have said in recent days, to be 'passive'. But even if there is no immediate clash, the Israelis and Americans must eventually strike, or lose what they perceive to be the larger war for the Mediterranean.

The tension and rumours of war began in earnest with the Israeli attack on two Syrian fighters on patrol on 19 November. Richard Murphy, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, recently told a congressional subcommittee that this attack, which he noted resulted in the Syrian aircraft being downed over *Syrian* territory, had precipitated the worsening atmosphere between Jerusalem and Damascus. What Murphy knew, but did not reveal, was that the Israelis had already started preparing for a major air strike against Syria at the time of the November incident; with US assistance, the stockpiling of bombs and missiles and the accelerated gathering of aerial intelligence on Syria has continued through the early months of the year.

According to data just released to the *NS* by the Pentagon, there has been an unprecedented surge in the delivery of US war material to Israel since last October. A similar surge occurred in the first three months of 1982, just before Israel launched its invasion of Lebanon (see *NS*, 20 August 1982). When the Israelis were preparing their attack in 1982, the military requirements were different, and Pentagon data on US deliveries of war material shows how. In 1982, the Israelis accelerated shipments of US fighter-bombers, tanks, tank transporters and long-range artillery pieces of the kind used to shell West Beirut. They also multiplied their purchases of ammunition and bombs.

By comparison with US arms deliveries in January-March 1982, the latest surge indicates that if the Israelis are contemplating an attack on Syria, it will be an air strike. When US and Israeli officials minimise the prospect of 'war' against Syria, they are referring to a ground attack of the type that characterized the 1982 Lebanon invasion or earlier Arab-Israeli wars. But they don't mean to exclude the possibility of air strikes, ostensibly justified by terrorist incidents and aimed at crippling or destroying the air defences Syria has rebuilt since their losses in 1982.

FROM AN ISRAELI perspective, there are a number of similarities in the present situation with the period of the 'war of attrition' between Israel and Egypt in 1969-70. At that time, having recouped Egyptian losses in 1967, President Gamal Abdel Nasser extended and integrated his air defences, and initiated a series of ground probes and artillery

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duels that were escalated by the Israelis who were occupying the Sinai right up to the Suez Canal at the time. One of the results of that campaign was intense pressure on Nasser himself, who had his first heart attack on 11 September, 1969, and another on 28 September, 1970; the second was fatal.

Israeli and US officials acknowledge their intense interest in the heart condition of Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad. The new director for the Middle East on the National Security Council Staff, Dennis Ross, made a point in a recent paper of raising the possibility of Assad's death — and the likelihood that if that should occur, Syria would revert to the pre-1970 pattern of leadership coups every few years after Assad dies.

There can be little doubt that the current war of nerves is intended to nudge Assad towards his grave. And if he should die, it is certain there would be overwhelming support in the Israeli cabinet to act, exploiting the potential vulnerability of Syria's command and control system, and opening up new possibilities for Israel to recoup its defeat in Lebanon. According to Ross, 'We and the Israelis may also want to begin talking privately of possible Syrian options — to be pursued following Assad's death . . .'

A *Washington Post* opinion poll late last month registered 67 per cent approval of a US attack on Syria 'if it can be proved that (Syria) was behind terrorist acts against Americans'. The campaign of propaganda and leaks in the press is designed to provide that rationale, and publicly force the more cautious and vacillating officials in Jerusalem aand Washington into agreeing, or appearing publicly to be 'soft' on Assad.

American officials like Shultz and Israelis like defence minister Yitzhak Rabin think more and more in parallel — both also have bitter, personal scores to settle with Assad; they believe that when the opportunities exist for a strike against Syria, it is foolish not to take the initiative. In the US, public opinion is not the restraint it was during the Lebanon War, and although some Congress representatives believe the US should not strike at Syria or back an Israeli attack, they aren't saying so publicly. The Peres government has its own political future immediately at stake, and the Americans would like the chance to destroy the two principal footholds on the Mediterranean which the Soviets can develop — Libya and Syria. Access to the land bases these two Arab states can provide to Soviet submarines, warships and aircraft will become increasingly important in a few years' time, when the Soviet fleet will include an attack aircraft carrier for the first time, and when the hold the US sixth fleet currently has on its Mediterranean bases may be much less certain.

For the moment it has to be wondered why for several weeks now Moscow has kept its Mediterranean fleet to just six warships and roughly 20 auxiliaries — an unusually small number by contrast with the Soviet fleet during earlier periods of Arab-Israeli tension or war. For Israeli and American officials anxious to strike at Syria, this appears a 'window of opportunity' they would love to exploit. □

NICARAGUA

FIGHT FOR LOST GROUND

Costly mistakes in the Sandinistas' treatment of Miskito Indians have fed Contra and US attacks. JANE DIBBLIN reports on the efforts to change policy

A POWERFUL accusation made by President Reagan against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua has been of mistreatment of the indigenous and Black populations of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Its power has been that it contained more than a grain of truth.

Early Sandinista mistakes included lack of bilingual education and relocation of Miskito Indians from their traditional homelands with no explanation and little sensitivity. Since then the Sandinistas have been working hard to put right not only their own costly errors but the deep mistrust between the different ethnic groups which is centuries old.

One daring experiment in negotiating local autonomy for the Atlantic Coast region, begun 18 months ago, comes to a head in June. The 1,000 plus representatives on the Autonomy Commission are working to a tight deadline to try to reach an agreement which can be incorporated into a new Constitution next January. Their task has been made more difficult because of the dangers of consultation in areas where the mercenary Contra are active. For autonomy to get very far, a permanent ceasefire will be needed at the very least, between the government forces and those Miskitos that have until recently been fighting in groups with the Contra. That's most likely to be possible in the south — the northern border with Honduras is much more volatile.

The stakes are high. If the Atlantic Coast people feel that their needs for cultural autonomy and a high degree of self-government are met, then some of the wind will be taken out of the US Administration's sails. Its broadcasts into the region in local languages from powerful radio transmitters in Honduras and Costa Rica will no doubt continue, but will find less resonance. It is no coincidence that as internal relations improve, the US-backed Contra have gone on the counter-attack, with a million dollar campaign to influence European public opinion.

The US is trying hard to convince both Miskito and Western public opinion that the autonomy talks are nothing more than a token public relations exercise. Human rights organisations like Amnesty International and indigenous people's pressure groups like Survival International, who have been critical in the past, have been invited to Nicaragua to see for themselves the detail and care taken in culling opinions from all the groups involved. For this may prove not only a watershed for Nicaragua but for future co-operation between liberation movements and indigenous groups throughout the continent.

One of the sticking points, though, will be security. The armed Miskito groups are demanding a total withdrawal of Sandinista troops from the region; an impossible demand, in practice, as it would mean allowing the Contra to move in wholesale. And, of course, even if the political needs are met, there is still going to be discontent over the state of food supplies as the US economic embargo continues to bite.

What the 'new' Nicaragua is grappling with is an entrenched historic problem. When the Spaniards settled the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua they virtually wiped out those of the indigenous population who were not 'exported' to other parts of the continent to work in Spanish mines. The Atlantic, meanwhile, was colonised by the British who armed the Miskitos; they were made the police of the region and decimated other indigenous groups, the Sumo and Rama. Nicaragua's other main group, Black English-speaking Creoles are descendants of slaves brought over from Africa by the British.

To add to the divisions created by colonisation, communication between east and west coasts of the country is difficult because of the huge mountain chain which separates them. The Somoza dynasty, first father then son, concentrated its power on the Pacific; the Atlantic became an enclave of US multinationals which stripped it of natural resources and left a population dependent on American capital. The Atlantic coast peoples were thus less deeply involved in the long fight to overthrow Somoza and had less invested in the new government.

TO COINCIDE with the new round of autonomy talks, two women who have been closely involved in the Autonomy Commission have arrived in Britain this week on a speaking tour. Dorothea Wilson, who is also a representative of the Atlantic Coast in the National Assembly, is hopeful that increased autonomy will split the Contra. 'There is a fundamental difference between the armed Miskitos — 10,000 out of 20,000 of whom have by now accepted amnesty — and the ex-National Guard and US mercenaries who make up the rest of the Contra. The Miskitos want specific demands met; the others want to overthrow the Sandinistas.'

There are some who will still be lured by the vast sums of money pumped into the Contra by the US Administration. And the Miskito continue to be caught up in the middle of a bloody border war, says Zoila Connelly, a Miskito teacher in charge of bilingual education. She talks of 15,000 Miskito returning to their homelands in Rio Coco, near the Honduran border, only to be attacked and force marched by Contra into Honduras.

The Reagan Administration cleverly fanned the flames of old and real grievances between Nicaragua's multi-ethnic population. 'We're working hard to overcome that. It takes time. Now we're waiting to see what else the US has in store for us', says Dorothea Wilson. □

For more information on the tour of England, Wales and Ireland phone 01-806 7123.

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LETTERS

Chernobyl: as the dust settles

Jonathan Stern, Joint Energy Programme, London SW1

Students of Soviet nuclear power and nuclear accidents owe a huge debt to Zhores Medvedev. Nevertheless, I would take issue with a number of points arising from his article (*NS* 9 May).

First, the reason why nuclear plants in the USSR are sited so close to centres of population (and why no notice was taken of Dollezhal and others who questioned this practice) is that, increasingly, this is the only source of energy which does not have to be brought thousands of miles from Siberia and Central Asia to consumers in the west of the country.

Second, East European countries may hesitate before importing additional nuclear reactors from the USSR, but what choice do they have? Aside from nuclear power, they will be able to gain access to additional supplies of Soviet natural gas (and perhaps also electricity from high voltage power lines), but incremental oil supplies will have to be paid for in hard currency either on world markets or from the USSR. The present environmental crisis in Eastern Europe stems from uncontrolled emissions from large scale burning of coal, much of it low quality, in the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Finally, I wish it was true that a serious investigation of reactors in CMEA countries was inevitable. Much more likely, unless we see resistance and civil disturbance in the Ukraine and East European countries on an unprecedented scale, is that after a cursory inspection of the rest of the RBMK reactors, the Soviet nuclear programme will carry on very much as before. Perhaps even more serious, we may never descover the real cause of the Chernobyl accident until an account written by somebody working in the reactor complex, with the expertise and integrity of Zhores Medvedev, sees the light of day.

Peter Lennard, Consumers against Nuclear Energy, London SW8

Openshaw and Fernie (*NS* 16 May), having seen Chernobyl's radiation spread over the whole of Europe and possibly having contaminated vast areas of Soviet farmland, suggest that we should push our reactors as far away from towns (i.e. into farming areas where 'less voters' live), and all will be well.

Their premise, that we need nuclear power, has seen little critique since Chernobyl, even if the safety factor has. It is about time that the *New Statesman* took a lead in the debate on a non-nuclear energy policy for the Left. Otherwise, with articles by pro-nuclear academics and half page ads from the CEGB propaganda machine we'll be wondering who is paying the piper to play which tune.

Peter Greig, London N22

Your editorial (*NS* 16 May) assumes a 'conflict between concern for the environment and concern for cheap energy, industry and employment'. This is a conflict that does not exist.

Far from producing cheap energy, nuclear power has been a financial disaster. We can hardly say we were not warned. Sir Christopher Hinton was one of the original architects of British nuclear technology and was made head of the CEGB with the purpose of encouraging nuclear power production. In 1959 he testified to a House of Commons Committee that 'the power stations which are at present being built will produce power more expensively than the conventional stations that we should be building'. He was talking of Magnox reactors which are supposed to be the industry's success story. Since Magnox we have suffered the AGR programme which has been described (by Professor David Henderson) as the greatest misallocation of public funds in British industrial history.

It follows that the nuclear energy has also been a disaster for employment. It has directly contributed to a disaster in the coal industry; also by effectively wasting public funds it has depressed employment throughout the economy, helped raised energy prices and depress exports.

As you rightly point out we cannot close down all our nuclear stations tomorrow. This fact should not be used by the Labour leadership to produce the sort of policy fudge we have seen this week, which satisfies no one and merely antagonises voters. After Chernobyl, there can be no compromise on the principle of phasing out nuclear power; equally there can be no doubt that the prospect of a nuclear-free Britain would give Labour a massive electoral advantage. Does Kinnock *really* want to win?

Looking for a fight

Martin Jones, London N4

A. J. Clay (Letters 9 May) has got it wrong. Jane Dibblin's account of a London bus driver being persuaded by protestors to stop driving his bus through the sitting crowd *is* accurate. The incident Clay describes of stones being thrown through a bus window was a separate occurrence involving a quite different bus. These stones were in fact thrown by two members of 'Class War' and I, and others, finally managed to stop them doing it.

The incident described by Jane Dibblin was connected with the bus at the head of the queue of traffic coming from the *opposite* direction. The police made repeated attempts to use this bus to drive through the sit-down protest. The driver made several attempts to comply with what were effectively orders from the police but finally concluded that he was in danger of hurting people and left his cab.

Like A. J. Clay, I was very disturbed by the stone-throwing, but I was also very disturbed by the excessive police violence in breaking up the protest. Long after the stones had stopped, police officers were behaving extremely roughly with wholly non-violent demonstrators — when a police inspector is seen trying to drag one of his own men off a protestor then things have clearly got out of control.

It is highly regrettable that a few 'Class War' thugs with no interest in CND should have gone to our demonstration looking for a fight. It is also regrettable that a few police officers seemed to have had similar motivations.

Banking on change

John Denham, War on Want, London SE1

It is true, as Clement Dixon argues (*NS* 2 May), that the lending banks are not the sole cause of the Latin American debt crisis. Yet it is vital to focus attention on their specific role in developing and sustaining the crisis.

Many of the massive problems facing the peoples of the developing countries can be ascribed to the workings of the world economic system. But this 'system' does not operate abstractly: it is made up on the actions of numerous individual companies and financial institutions as well as the intervention of governments.

Much campaigning to change the relations between the advanced industrial countries and the Third World fails to strike a chord because it ignores the detail of the way in which some companies operate, and so misses the opportunity to bring general problems home in a way which members of the public can respond to. The banks *did* lend irresponsibly; they *are* pressing for policies which keep millions in poverty. Such

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AND NOW OVER TO THE TCCB COURT AND THE TRIAL OF IAN BOTHAM
TEST AND COUNTY CRICKET BOARD
..AND WHAT WOULD BE THE MEDICAL EFFECTS OF SMOKING THIS ER... "POT"?
OH, LOSS OF OUTSWING..: INCREASED TENDENCY TO FLASH OUTSIDE THE OFF-STUMP OR REVERSE-SWEEP... .. INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO LEG STUMP YORKERS... THAT SORT OF THING
OBJECT-ION M'LUDS!
RENT-A-DOC
M'LUDS, THE BIGGEST MEDICAL DANGER OF SMOKING CANNIBIS ARISES FROM THE FACT THAT IT IS MIXED WITH TOBACCO
JOHN MINNION
OBJECTION OVERRULED! WE ALL KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THE ONLY SERIOUS SIDE-EFFECT OF TOBACCO IS £700,000-A-YEAR SPONSORSHIP!

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facts need to be widely known.

War on Want's 'Profits Out Of Poverty?' campaign presses for changes — voluntary or imposed — in the policies of the banks. Bank action alone cannot solve the debt crisis, but bank action is *part* of any solution. Equally important, public pressure to change the policies of the banks is an essential component in building support for wider and more just changes in the world economic system.

Judges from the Dark Ages

Brenda Wilks, Doncaster

Congratulations on your editorial 'In the heat of the moment' (*NS* 9 May). Your point about premeditation and the difference in physical strength between men and women is very well stated. But I think there is also another aspect to this gross inequality of treatment between men and women in the courts. Our judges are mainly male, elderly, and reactionary. They tend to live in the dark ages when women were the legal property of men and were expected to put up with abuse and humiliation without retaliating. Men, on the other hand, receive sympathetic treatment from judges when they retaliate against a woman who deviates from what some sections of society still regard as the 'normal' feminine role.

It is not only the premeditation rule which needs altering, but also the attitudes of the judiciary and society as a whole.

No, Minister

James Hallam, London N1

Peter Kellner (*NS* 9 May) has again raked over the embers of the civil servant's loyalty question. What should happen is that civil servants, while not being allowed to comment on policy, should be permitted to report malpractice — perhaps reporting only to privileged ears, such as the chair and vice chair of a Parliamentary Select Committee. Malpractice should be defined; it should certainly include lying to the public. Whether an alleged lie was in fact one would be a matter to be decided by the Select Committee.

G. Cole, Datchet, Berks.

If the law has been broken the civil servant has a citizen's duty to report it. That will probably have dire enough results for the government and he has no duty directly to stir up public opinion. If it is a moral, and not a legal issue, we should not try to improve our imperfect democracy by legitimising disloyalty. We must find other means if we want our ministers to be better men (*sic*).

Revolt of pleasure and desire

Stephen Dorril, Huddersfield

Contrary to what Anne Karpf (*NS* 16 May) suggests, the evidence from Oxford University with regard to people watching television, in my opinion, points towards TV being very much a passive medium. Maybe not a hypodermic needle but certainly a laxative.

The Frankfurt school and their later heirs, the Situationists, never regarded the viewer as a totally passive individual. If it were the case the viewer would be little more than a robot with no option of revolt. There is always a certain psychological distance, not physical, between the consumer and the commodity. It is this 'distance' which enables the viewer to keep a critical eye on television. But problems arise when this 'critical eye' is itself consumed by television.

The classic case are the Soaps which Ms Karpf so admires. One tends to view Soaps with a slightly superior air. We know that they are garbage, but one can always find something to admire in them to get over that hurdle. It may be their awfulness. All the time we watch more and more what we profess to dislike. Wogan can spend a whole programme poking fun and being cynical at Soaps. It's a 'knowingness' in which we can all share. But it is always uncritical and has in any case been fully integrated as part of the medium.

It would be wrong to accuse, as Ms Karpf does, the critics of television as being 'kill joys'. That may be the case of the traditional new Left and Trots but the most trenchant opponents of television have been those who saw revolt in terms of pleasure and desire. Television is not to be linked with pleasure because ultimately it is alienating. Desire comes with active participation not consumption.

Nom de Bloom

Ian Bloom, London N1

It might have been worse, I suppose. You jokers could have attributed my piece on the Left Book Club (*NS* 16 May) to Ian Botham, Ian Paisley, Ian Smith or even Ian Hislop, so I'm grateful for small mercies. You'll be glad to hear that Ian Holm and I have reached an agreement: If I don't appear at the National Theatre, he won't be credited with the authorship of my articles. But here's the tricky bit — we need your co-operation.

What do you say?

Ed note: We say we're very sorry. Sincere apologies to both Ians.

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Above: African mask from the Henry Moore collection. Left: Mother and Child, Henry Moore, 1931

UNSUNG INNOVATORS

Few Western art forms have not, at some time, made use of Black creativity or of the 'mirror' of Black experience. Yet even radical arts movements in Britain have turned away from exploring creative links with Black Arts. KWESI OWUSU reviews the cultural silences

BLACK ARTISTS and cultural activists in Europe have always been unsung innovators, barely acknowledged by the chroniclers of the day and made invisible in the encyclopaedias which decorate the bookshelves of libraries and study rooms. In memorials, commemorations and other rituals of historical recollection as well as in the legends, traditions and folklore of the dominant culture, we are absent. Yet as a collective force, our contribution lies fossilised in the very foundations of Western civilisation.

During the European renaissance, philosophers affirmed Greece and Rome as the basis of that civilisation. In doing so they, like the museum curators of today, ignored the source of much of the wisdom which went into its making: the land of the African pharoahs in Egypt, Asia and China. They ignored too the role played by those older cultures in nurturing and sustaining European movements and traditions. Significantly Black artists and cultural activists have functioned as critical mirrors, enabling society to see itself in new ways, otherwise masked by cultural conditioning.

In creative terms, Black arts have been creative catalysts, the key to new realms of exploration and innovation. Sometimes their work directly influences European artists. In the visual arts we can see it from Picasso and Cuba to the Orientalists, or in the sculptures of Henry Moore. In classical music we hear in the work of such composers as Mozart and Beethoven whose eyes, according to musicologist H C Farmer were opened to 'the possibilities of a new tone, colour and fresh rhythmic devices' by African musicians (then wrongly described as Turkish. Black musicians were especially popular in 18th century military bands.) Their influence on Dvorak, Gershwin, and Stravinsky is better recognised. In literature, we find Blacks as a critical mirror in works from one of the earliest English novelists Aphra Behn (her novel *Oroonoko or the History of the Royal Slave*, published in 1688, was an early attack on the slave trade), in Daniel Defoe, in his portrayal of

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Man Friday, and in the Gothic novel.

Black musicians have obviously had a massive impact on the more contemporary media of popular arts and culture. In British pop music today, it is almost impossible to find hit records which are not derivatives of Black music, whether from Black America, the Caribbean or Africa. Presently the Notting Hill Carnival is Europe's biggest street festival attracting more than a million people last year. Its significance lies not merely in the innovative expressions of almost all art forms, but also in its historical symbolism: a crucial antithesis to the history of State suppression of events of mass celebration in Britain, a suppression especially draconian during the industrial revolution.

The token acknowledgement of dominant cultural institutions to the impact of Black arts or the media silences on the contributions of Black artists echo similar attitudes to women and working class creativity. They reflect the workings of the dominant mode of cultural appropriation and censorship. However, this appropriation does not always take place in the same way. In Britain it is both racist and Eurocentric.

On a few occasions, this appropriation has provided ironic twists to memorable events. When Winston Churchill was stirring the patriotism of the British people during the Second World War with his speech beginning 'If we must die . . .' he was quoting no less a person than Jamaican born Claude McKay, a leading light of the Harlem renaissance, which itself affirmed the traditions of orature — the interconnection of different forms of creativity as in a festival — in the 1920s and '30s. When George Bernard Shaw met McKay in London he saw fit to ask him why he had become a poet instead of a boxer:

> It must be tragic for a sensitive Negro to be a poet. Why didn't you choose pugilism instead of poetry for a profession?' he asked. 'Poetry picked me as a medium instead of my picking poetry as a profession' I replied.

THE RELATIONSHIP between Black and women's creativity to working class culture and the State has begun to assume crucial significance in contemporary cultural forms which aim at radical departures from existing cultural and artistic dogmas. This is partly because, since the 1960s, some of the most innovative challenges to bourgeois culture have been instigated by the new cultural politics articulated by the Black and women's movements and by some sections of the Left and workers' movements. These groups have primarily been those which have challenged the reduction of culture to a mere reflection of economic forces by the dominant discourses of marxism and socialism. Ironically, this reflects similar philistine attitudes in the State: that the arts exist merely to decorate the 'theatrical apparatuses' of class power.

But while the impact of radical forces has been considerable, they have barely fulfilled their potential as a *collective alternative force*. The potentially dynamic connections and alliances which could be made between various artists and cultural movements in the wider terrain of struggle to make culture more democratic have barely happened. Instead, the relationship between Black and white has been at best tense, at worst non-existent or domineering. All white people, irrespective of social class, share an uneven but collective cultural authority — in the widest sense — in relation to Black people. One consequence of this is that where there are collaborations between Black and white they usually mean the denial of Black independence and aspirations.

In education and in liberal sections of the media and the arts, this has, since the early 1970s, taken the form of liberal 'multi-cultural' practice. In the political sphere, it has manifested itself in the growth of the race relations industry in both central and local government, with the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality and numerous related advisory boards and committees. Such developments rarely consider the racism that is found in and enforced by institutions.

In tackling racism, most white activists make the mistake of seeing Black people merely as victims of the system, revealing an underlying morality that encourages patronising relationships. Most white art movements have by default denied the culture of Black resistance to the system. The rich store of cultural material and ideas, some of which give insights into the currrent crisis of Western culture, is rarely explored. For example, Notting Hill Carnival, with its emphasis on the fusion of art forms like music, dance, poetry, craft and visual forms like masks and costumes, reflects the tradition of orature which challenges the atomisation of Western art forms. It encourages a multi-levelled fusion of the political and cultural, and social co-authorship of the products of creativity.

Instead of recognising this vitality, there is the assumption of a cultural void within the Black community, a void which local white projects and activists try to fill with their arts programmes and activities. These are usually Eurocentric in form and content for, significantly, white artists rarely challenge the cultural authority which they derive from being part of racist national culture. This is as true in 'alternative' cultural practices, which too often draw on an economistic view of culture. This comes over in a political approach which likes to

Right: costumes, masks, music, dance and more come together in the tradition of orature at the Notting Hill carnival *Camera Press*

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imagine a problem-free collaborative relationship between Black and white working class people. It is usually expressed in simplistic 'let's all come together' slogans and clichés associated with sections of the workers' movement, liberal and radical political parties and trade unions.

THE ERADICATION OF racism is not, needless to say, just a simple matter of moral crusades or 'let's all get merry' community festivals and classes, as many 'ethnic arts' reports and practices seem to imply. In doing so they chuck different cultural and artistic forms into a melting pot often without acknowledging how different they are. 'Ethnic arts' — the official designation — also do not challenge the way in which Black arts are depreciated by racial stereotyping.

It is still very fashionable to see the *tour de force* of Black creativity as its ability to express a primitive, exotic essence. The Black musician is thought to have a monopoly on natural rhythm, to be a specialist in sensual artistry. But he or she is rarely regarded as capable of making a significant intellectual contribution to music or culture generally. The position of Black people within Britain, before 1807 as slaves and presently as a sub-layer of the white working class has influenced the racist stratification of culture; a stratification also formed by sex and class. Let us offer a brief illustration.

FRINGE THEATRE emerged in the late '60s at the same time as the new movement of Black Theatre. The politics of Fringe implied sympathy with the needs and demands of Black Theatre. By the 1980s however Fringe — largely white — had used State funding to consolidate previously weak infrastructures and open up several new theatres in London. Many of the Fringe's leading playwrights and directors had become the 'new radicals' of the Royal Court, National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. The irony of this success is that Fringe Theatre's cradle-mate, the Black Theatre movement, did not have a single home to its name. Despite their copious and growing talent, Black playwrights and directors were the new perennial artists: dusty manuscripts, and sometimes no money even to pay water bills.

In the aftermath of the Black Keskidee Theatre, white Fringe Theatre did take up the issue of racism, especially in response to the 1981 uprisings in Brixton and Southall. This gave a higher profile to some of the issues which confronted the Black community within the structures of British radical theatre. In the relationship which quickly developed however the issues of power and patronage between Black theatre and white Fringe Theatre were not tackled. Like the community arts movement, Fringe Theatre found itself in an awkward position in dealing with some of the implications of the power it had recently acquired through its success in getting funding from the State.

Yet where some elements of the community arts movement sought collaboration with Black arts groups and individuals, through local workshops, projects, campaigns, festivals and the organisation of Carnival, most fringe theatres chose to go their own way — reiterating anti-racist slogans and polishing up their 'multi-cultural' profiles as they went. In some cases it was felt that being 'avant-garde' was, in itself, a guarantee of the rejection of all oppressive ideas and structures.

The failure of the Fringe to make stronger connections with Black theatre largely wasted the potential of such relationships. Genuine support for Black productions, in terms of administration, space and facilities and sometimes management or participation in creative processes, led to predominantly European aesthetic directions. It also promoted a small core of new playwrights at the expense of the movement as a whole. Farrukh Dondy comments on the subsequent emergence of the new playwrights.

> The urge to have an authoritative whiff of Brixton or Southall in Sloane Square or on the South Bank served to promote the young playwrights from school and college drama groups and youth club theatricals in which they were stimulating new audiences of their peers, onto the stages of the adventurous establishment theatres which prided themselves on fringe-ism.

This new core of Black Playwrights found themselves caught in a paradox. They wrote passionately and instinctively about racism, but they themselves, courtesy of the Fringe, 'had enjoyed the fastest rise known to the British arts'. This may well be a slight exaggeration; we have already mentioned what may have been an even faster flight to the South Bank — that of the white Fringe directors and playwrights themselves.

But the rise of these Black playwrights through the fringe led to a reduction of the aesthetic which had been developed in the previous years of struggle. This aesthetic had challenged the notion of 'art for art's sake' or indeed the notion of abstract aesthetic criteria. Rather, it highlighted orature particularly in its fusion of the political and the cultural and its sensitive but strong affirmation of black theatrical forms. Directors like Rufus Collins, the playwright Edgar White, as well as players like Tee Bone Wilson and Wanjiku Kiarie collaborated in many interesting productions.

But as the individuals separated from the movement, there was a depreciation of content and quality, a shallowness of analysis, which were not compensated for by technical competence or their higher media profile. Gone were many of the exciting themes of cultural resurgence which had characterised the days of Black Power and Keskidee. There were now half-baked sociological diagnoses of the 1980 uprisings, and the stigmatisation of the Black community through 'in' phrases like 'problems of Black youth', 'arranged marriages', 'conflict between first and second generation West Indians', 'youth and culture in Babylon', 'police harassment' and so on. This sort of cultural sociology also produced the romantic idealisation of ghetto life.

A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT in the radical cultural politics of the '70s and mid '80s was the emergence of the GLC and the interventions it made on behalf of arts practitioners who had previously been discriminated against. As a facilitator, it crystallised many of the positive developments in Black, women's and popular culture generally and hinted at many dynamic possibilities of collaboration. For Black arts groups, GLC funding helped to reduce the dependence on less sympathetic funding bodies and encouraged more independent initiatives. In 1985-86 the Black arts budget exceeded £2 million. Who will replace this funding?

Not much luck from the Arts Council which has recently released its 'Action Plan: Ethnic Arts — Proposals for Development', drawn up by Anthony Everitt. The document sees Black Arts firmly within the old and well worn path of Ethnic Arts, thus retaining the same patronising approach which Black artists have criticised in the past. Most regional arts associations have been slow in responding to the new and radical Black arts movement, despite its current high profile in some arts media. The recent report of Greater London Arts, 'In the Eye of the Needle' also portrays the familiar managerial and organisational inadequacies which have in the past compounded the discrimination against Black artists.

The investigation of racism revealed more profound ills: a lack of democracy and accountability. This suggests a strong relationship between racism in and by institutions and lack of democracy. The challenge of Black arts is therefore a challenge to democracy for, as the report concluded, it is only by 'breaking down hierarchies, traditional methods of working, of relating to people, of becoming more broadbased in representation and concerns' that we shall guarantee an organic Black presence. □

Kwesi Owusu's book, The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain, *was published this month by Comedia, price £4.95.*

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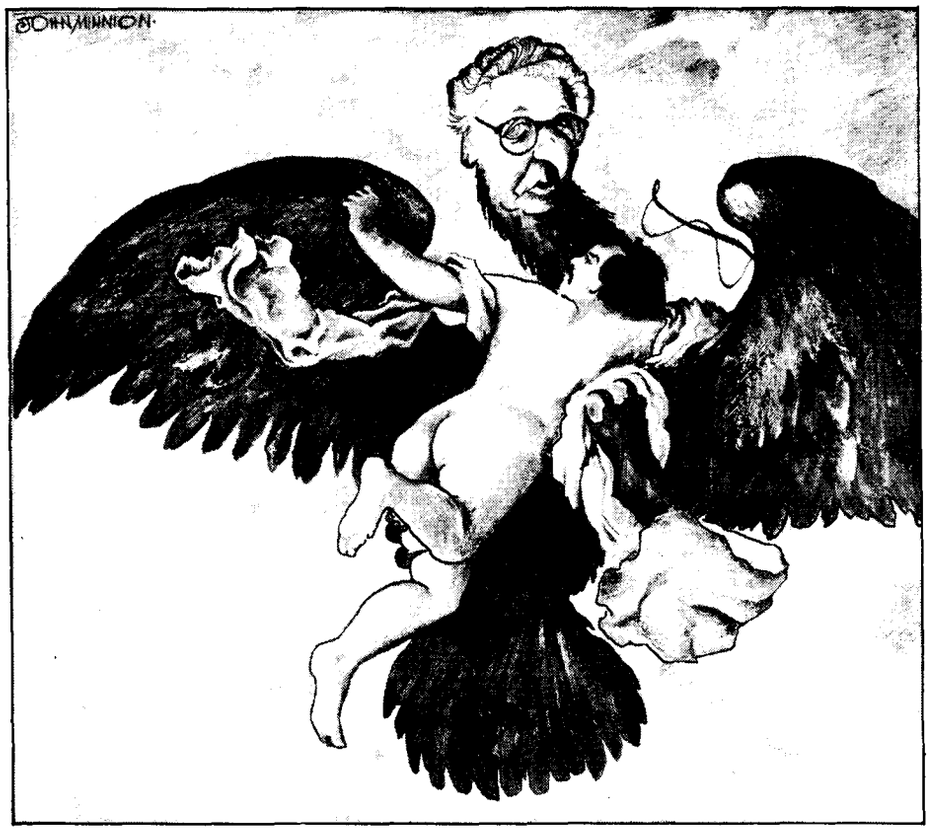

John Minnion

Had Michelangelo loved a woman . . .

Andrew Lumsden

Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society
JAMES M. SASLOW *Yale* £25
Out in Art
Intr. NICK STANLEY *GMP* £14.95 & £7.95

> There is something *passé* about this — the interest in a specifically homosexual sensibility or culture (*Peter Ackroyd in the* Spectator *10 May 1986)*

RICH, THAT, coming from a novelist who's made money out of a fictitious testament of Oscar Wilde. As rich as columnist Bernard Levin taking an acre in *The Times* the fortnight before (28 April) to warn gay men — he had nothing to say of lesbians — not to construct a 'new ghetto' by laying claim to great names of the past as ornaments of a splendid homoerotic tradition in which living gays should revel.

I'm always ready to praise Levin for his outbursts against criminal and social persecution of gays (there was another such outburst in his piece of 28 April) and I acknowledge that every one of us can make horrendous factual slips. But I'm also here to say that a man who once devoted a similar acre in *The Times* to his notion that the Parthenon was built for Apollo rather than Athene should take a deep breath before instructing 500,000 of the Great and Good on sex and creativity.

Three days before Levin's well-intended recommendation to gays, and 16 before Ackroyd's absurd statement to *Spectator* readers, the first UK copies of Saslow's **Ganymede in the Renaissance** became available. The book tells in a splendidly illustrated 265-page sweep of the uses to which Renaissance gays put the myth of Ganymede; and of its, and their, subsequent debasement at the hands of the homophobic Counter-Reformation. I deliberately use the modern vocabulary (*gay, homoerotic, homophobic*) for these are analytic tools rigorously guarded from anachronism in such research as Saslow's.

Let's attend the Levin-Ackroyd School: lesbians shouldn't argue that desires and affections such as they feel today are to be found in the poetry of Mytilenean Sappho in the 6th century BC. They are not to comfort themselves with Sappho when rejected by families or employers or their own lovers. They are not to mourn the misogyny which prevented transmission into the modern era of nearly all the songs by the poet whom ancient opinion valued next to Homer. The two sexes of homosexuality, and the other great orientation (*viz* heterosexuality) besides, are not to value openly the intellectual and imaginative achievements of those minds which, over the centuries, have contemplated their own homoerotic desires and frustrations.

What is the Levin-Ackroyd teaching? If I understand it, it is that uppity gays of today, with a chauvinism the mirror of old-time heterosexuality's, are wrongly trying to define the *Symposium* of Plato (say) or the Sistine ceiling of Michelangelo as works which could never have been the same — or perhaps never have existed at all — had their creators not been, as we say, gay. Had Plato and Michelangelo been respectively attracted to Irene or Lucretia and not, as they were, to Aster ('You were the morning star . . .') and Cavalieri ('I with your beautiful eyes . . .') we would never know the difference, say our two educators.

Ah! So when work has become 'universal' and a pride of the whole world it is the part of the civilised not to enquire into its original sensual and mental inspiration. I get it. I would be at fault if I suggested that Mozart's operas breathe and celebrate his passion for women; and if I were a woman I should be quite uninterested in the circumstance. If I were heterosexual I would recognise nothing in common between my joys and upsets and Mozart's, which he transformed into a *stupor mundi* for straights and gays alike.

I can't imagine any creative artist (unless Ackroyd wishes to come forward as an exception) who wouldn't run away from the Levin-Ackroyd School. But let's turn to the Ganymede legend, one, just *one*, of the 3,000-year-old homoerotic tales still familiar in the West. Zeus, it will be recalled, was enraptured by a shepherd son of Trojan Priam c.1,300 BC just before Helen took herself the toyboy Paris and launched the War. In the shape of an eagle, Zeus swept Ganymede up from the windy plain of Ilium to be his cupbearer and bedfellow.

In the ancient world erotic works on vases, in sculpture, in paint (lost) and in poetry naughtily rhapsodised the tale. Saslow tells how in the Italian Quattro and Quinquecento Neo-Platonists, gay male misogynists, 'sodomites', every faction of the post-mediaeval New Learning leapt on the story to explore, communicate or struggle against the sensuality so frowned on by Aquinas. We find Michelangelo drawing a Ganymede in 1533 as a love-gift to Cavalieri. Unravelling the iconography Saslow shows us the 57-year-old artist both confessing his love and resisting it. We find Parmigianino frankly exulting in his homosexuality. And (it had to happen in Whitehall) we find Inigo Jones 'expelling' Ganymede with equal frankness from the court of Charles I in 1634, in a *masque* upon the death of Charles's gay father James VI & I.

Just days before Levin and Ackroyd kicked up separately in their different papers I myself seized an acre of *this* paper (11 April) to rebuke the nation's music critics for their reluctance in obituaries of Peter Pears to spell out the homoerotic roots of many of his best-loved performances, in Britten settings of James, Mann, Owen and — yes — Michelangelo. Bizarre chance that the two columnists so promptly moved in to assure their presumptively straight audiences that we gays are off our heads with our talk of a historical treasury of experience and expressiveness.

Pupils of Levin and Ackroyd could do worse, if they can afford it, than buy both Saslow's *Ganymede* and GMP's new selection of young gay painters, **Out in Art**. And deny the continuities of gay perception then. If they can. □

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Round corners

Stephanie Jordan

The Dancer and the Dance
MERCE CUNNINGHAM in conversation with JACQUELINE LESSCHAEVE *Marion Boyars* £18

FEW CHOREOGRAPHERS talk as sensibly about dance as Merce Cunningham and it is to Jacqueline Lesschaeve's credit that she has captured in conversation such essential information from him. She allows him plenty of space to range widely over the subject of dance — his own dances, those of others and the people who dance in them — keeping her own comments brief.

This is the revision of a 1980 publication, based on interviews that took place in France and New York in 1977 and 1980. It is illuminating for a wide readership for, to those unfamiliar with his work, Cunningham explains his unconventional spatial-temporal organisation of dance and the relationship between his dance and its music and design. More than in any other published source, he goes beyond his familiar, quick, automatic explanation of his credo, his courteously delivered response to countless anxious, keen or angry spectators. For Lesschaeve, he provides what has been long awaited: descriptions, sometimes detailed, of individual dances, analyses of their structures and of his idiosyncratic creative methods (chance techniques, coin-tossing, application of the I-Ching).

Supported by Cunningham's working notes and diagrams, this discussion of abstract processes is never dull. Knowing the science behind the piece in no way undermines the genius of the end product. Rather, we can now appreciate that the very structures that he requires for each piece are imaginative and potent and that the eye behind the ultimate selection from what has evolved is unerring. Amid discussion of dance structures, to remind us of the human content in Cunningham's work, Lasschaeve has inserted an interlude on expressive moments, evocative gestures and intimate connections that have happened during the formative process.

If the book's structure makes its material digestible, it is also, like a Cunningham piece, informative: it starts with a discussion of *Torse*, a recent dance (which immediately confounds all conservative notions of structure), then passes back and forth between biography, other dances and other topics, notation, work for other companies, the technique class and its relationship to performance. Throughout, we gain the impression of a man with an exceptionally vigorous sense of the potential of a piece, a genius in divergent thinking 'convinced that there's something that I'm missing, as though I can't quite see around the corner'. The book ends with a clarifying account of Cunningham's most recent experiments in video dance and, typically, their impact on his other activities: a new sense of stage space, the overturning of conventions yet again.

It is disappointing that, in an otherwise up-to-date, well illustrated book with valuable chronology and other lists, there are no illustrations of Cunningham's fine recent work. A more serious shortcoming is the limited index, which includes names of individuals but none of dances and no references to topics covered. This is a book that will be read as much for reference as for pleasure and working through it simply to find out about a particular dance is a tedious obligation. It is a pity that such reservations must be expressed about a book that is such an important contribution to dance literature. □

FICTION

Anger is not enough

Adewale Maja-Pearce

The Seven Ages
EVA FIGES *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
Peeling
GRACE BARTRAM *The Women's Press* £8.95 & £3.95
Blues Dance
AMON SABA SAAKANA *Karnak House* £7.95 & £3.95
An After-Dinner's Sleep
STANLEY MIDDLETON *Hutchinson* £9.95
Don Quixote
KATHY ACKER *Grafton Books* £2.95

THE SEVEN AGES is a history of England over the last one thousand years re-written from the point of view of women:

> The women had no part in it, the singing, songs of the heroes, for they might have told another story, if they had been heard in the great hall. For though in winter they heard the bard sing of old heroes . . . with the coming of spring and the sad cry of the cuckoo came death for us, working in the fields, and our barns burning.

It is a bloody tale she has to tell and, if one compares *The Seven Ages* to *The Flounder*, it is only because the author herself has dedicated her novel to Günter Grass. Both writers begin with the premise that the excesses of European civilisation have been the result of the predominance of men but, where Grass examines in great detail the full implications of the feminist charge, and does so with a profound grasp of history, Eva Figes is content merely to state it in the form of a catalogue of rape and destruction as though that were all that European history amounted to.

Feminism is also the theme of **Peeling**, Grace Bartram's first novel. Dealing, we are told, 'with an area too little covered by fiction', it tells the story of a middle-aged woman coming to terms with the break-up of her 30-year marriage. Allys Esterwood goes through the obligatory period of mourning in which she nearly has a breakdown, does a spell in a women's refuge, comes to terms with her daughter's lesbianism and eventually discovers herself as a woman of strength and character. The author paints a dismal picture of Australian men who appear to divide their time between beating their wives and swilling lager. It may be a true picture for all I know — Australian men can hardly be said to have the most enviable of reputations abroad — but their going so far as to hang corks from their straw hats sounds like European propaganda. And it's a pity that Grace Bartram is such an abysmal writer. One can't take seriously characters one simply doesn't believe in, particularly when the prose is so sloppy.

The prose isn't much better in Amon Saba Saakana's **Blues Dance:** 'The sun was shining, but there were clouds in the sky, and suddenly without explanation the rain started dripping.' A universe in which the rain *explains* when it is about to start *dripping* will be a universe in which no one will have any need for umbrellas; meanwhile, the novel opens with the hero, a 15-year-old British West Indian who has dropped out of school because he can no longer cope with his teachers' racist attitudes, about to appear in court for shop-lifting. Thereafter we follow his progress through Rastafarianism, confrontation with the National Front and the Police (synonymous in this case), a relationship with a slightly older 'sister' and his determination to get himself to university to study 'Afrikan' history and culture as the only means of coming to a better understanding of the position of Black people in a white society.

There is undoubtedly a good story in all of this, and one worth telling: the experience of Britain's immigrant population, in the hands of a good writer, could tell us much about the present state of British society. Such a novel has yet to be written. The anger at the shabby treatment West Indians received after being invited here in the 1950s to sweep the streets and drive the buses may be justifiable, but anger alone does not make a good book.

It seems ironic that the best written of the current batch of novels should also be the most conventional. **An After-Dinner's Sleep**, which is Stanley Middleton's 25th novel, tells the story of a retired middle-class Scotsman whose life is suddenly disrupted by the appearance on his doorstep, late one evening, of a woman he had loved as a young man but who had married a rival. Their ensuing relationship, unexpected but welcome, leads him to review a life he had until then considered enviable: 'His whole career was shot through with misjudgment, mismanagement, support of wrong causes, failure to assist decent men and women, he

Among this week's contributors

Nicci Gerrard co-edits *Women's Review*.

Martin Ince is features editor of the *Engineer* and co-author, with David Hine, of *Star Wars* (Camden Press).

Adewale Maja-Pearce has a collection of short stories being published by Longman this summer.

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considered, and yet he was still praised as one of the most successful directors of education in the whole country since the war.'

This is a thin plot indeed, better suited perhaps to a short story, but Stanley Middleton is one of those relentlessly middle-brow writers who are constantly praised, by relentlessly middle-brow critics, for their ability to 'illuminate the important matters beneath the surface that ordinary people feel but rarely talk about'. This is another way of saying that nothing very much happens in their novels to people who don't very much matter in circumstances that are hardly worth writing about: in fact, that their novels are trivial.

Trivial, but not in bad taste. Kathy Acker is one of those American writers who imagine that the index of one's literary worth is in direct proportion to one's ability to say 'fuck' and 'shit' and 'cunt' on every page. Purporting to be engaged on 'an investigation of ... American history', the heroine of **Don Quixote** is accompanied on her quest by a series of dogs. Günter Grass, what have you done? □

Regimented monsters

Nicci Gerrard

Simone de Beauvoir
JUDITH OKELY *Virago* £3.50
Emily Dickinson
HELEN McNEIL *Virago* £3.50
Vesta Tilley
SARA MAITLAND *Virago* £3.50
Julia Margaret Cameron
AMANDA HOPKINSON *Virago* £3.95

THE FIRST FOUR books of the Virago Pioneer series illuminate the problem from which most 'series' suffer: slim, accessible, indexed and chronologised, they are dulled by the necessary standardisation of introductions. It is unclear whether they are aimed at the initiated reader who has already read, for instance, Emily Dickinson, or the reader wanting to be introduced. This indecision results in a tone of pleasant restraint. Useful, lucid, consistently competent but rarely excited, the studies refuse to take the risks suggested by their 'Pioneer' title and become, instead, handbooks.

There is a need for feminist studies which prise open academic closures and give life to women who have been deadened into footnotes. Judith Okely is the only author whose subject, Simone de Beauvoir, was still alive at the time of writing. It may be this which accounts for her intensely self-centred evaluation of the influential thinker. Or it may be that de Beauvoir's own continual self-reflection and self-evaluation lead critics into either re-writing and unpicking her words or seeking artificially innovative forms.

Judith Okely bases **Simone de Beauvoir** on the contrast between her first dazzled reading of *The Second Sex* as a young girl in Paris in 1960 and her more ambivalent later response. The method enables her to assess changes in women's lives and in feminist thinking over the last 25 years and to describe how de Beauvoir's writing and life challenged and inspired women while concealing a Eurocentric and patriarchal bias. Okely avoids being authoritative and reductive, recognising that her evaluation can only be 'true' for a specific time and place. But her continual self-reference palls: there are times when she seems to lose sight of de Beauvoir and France altogether and the testimony shifts to Okely. Perhaps the opening sentence of the study — 'She was our mother, our sister and something of ourselves' — explains her approach, but the author's own letters, or a photograph of a page from *The Second Sex* showing Judith Okely's annotations, do not help illuminate a woman whose death last month marked the end of an era.

Helen McNeil, by contrast, concentrates on **Emily Dickinson**'s writing: her critical analysis of the texts sadly lacks a context. Emily Dickinson's life was externally uneventful; she was a retiring woman and, in her later life, virtually a recluse; she was a devoted daughter and sister, a New Englander with an enduring love of nature, a domesticated and reserved woman who chose seclusion. Within her room she wrote thousands of poems, never published until her death, about volcanoes, deserts, eternity, suicide, physical passion, power, madness, despair, silence and the grave; that which is under pressure in us erupts in the splintered syntax of her poetry, where words ring out in a great silence. McNeil contends that Dickinson's reclusiveness was a strategy for asking forbidden questions and that the absence of a readership in her own lifetime allowed her to escape the normal constraints of a conservative, Puritan, New England spinster. But she drops this suggestion into her unfocused textual criticism, rather than using it as a framework. Consequently, her study fails as an introduction (no one who does not already know Dickinson's work would really find it helpful) but neither is it useful for Dickinson lovers. The quiet poet remains a private figure hidden behind the closed doors of her room.

Where Okely and McNeil curb their imagination and delight, Sara Maitland is unashamedly fascinated by **Vesta Tilley**, 'the greatest of all gender benders' and 'most perfect of mashers', who, for 40 years, was the toast of the rich and famous. Male impersonator, actress, Pantomine Boy, silent movie star and Member of Parliament's wife, she deserves, as Maitland declares, 'a brassy book'. She doesn't really get one, although Maitland is interesting on gender and its meaning, on cross dressing, class mobility, women's professionalism and the extraordinary public acceptance of an outrageous performer. Tilley was overtly right-wing, refusing to identify herself with the causes of feminism or working-class politics and confining sexual daring rigidly to the stage. The curious friction between her subversive persona and her stiffly conservative private self are sensitively analysed by Maitland, who recognises that such a dualism offers disruptive possibilities while simultaneously rendering them safe and controlled. But the flavour of the Music Halls and the sense of Maitland's own relish is intermittent — where Maitland is brassiest, she is best.

Julia Margaret Cameron is the one gloriously funny and compulsive book of the series. This is Amanda Hopkinson's first book and its subject is a gift for any author. Julia Margaret Cameron was 49 in 1864 when she was given a camera by her daughter. Within two years, and with typical obsession and disregard of photographic conventions, she had developed her hobby into an art. Cameron's photographs are scattered throughout the book; showing her fine and justly famous portraits (Tennyson, Sir John Herschel, Longfellow, Browning, Holman Hunt) and her more ludicrous and excessively romantic allegorical scenes ('Mrs Cameron has more Poetry than she can deal with', observed Quentin Bell). Cameron emerges as a wonderfully eccentric woman. Irresistible tales of how she chased Tennyson round the house, how she tried to persuade Thackeray to let her ghostwrite his novel, how she redecorated the spare rooms in which she slept overnight, all bring to life a bossy, generous and excessive woman. Her love of Truth, Beauty and Art produced photographs that were often sentimentally ghastly, but some are among the finest portraits ever taken. □

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Shorter reviews

Atomic Crossroads: Before and After Sizewell

JOHN VALENTINE *Merlin Press* £12.50 & £5.95

The main risk incurred by anyone who writes about the two-and-a-quarter-year Sizewell nuclear inquiry is boredom. Either the writer will grow weary of the abstruse technical arguments about nuclear safety and test discount rates or the reader — Chernobyl notwithstanding — will be reduced to a state of catatonic tedium reading about these things. Or, worse, the potential purchaser will just see 'Sizewell' in the title and look for a more riveting read elsewhere.

John Valentine manages to avoid all of these problems most of the time. Instead of trying to provide comprehensive coverage of all that happened at Sizewell, he concentrates on what he sees as the key issues from which lessons can be drawn. Thus he describes the crucial economic arguments, the frightful debacle over Sizewell's safety licencing, the controversy over the military use of civil plutonium, the health risks of low-level radiation and the nuclear waste debate.

Although he sometimes allows himself to get bogged down in too much detail, he deals with these issues in a readable way. His familiar nuclear history introduces an original, if somewhat mathematical, analysis of the overall success of the Central Electricity Generating Board's nuclear power programme to date. When compared to their designed capability, the Board's power stations have apparently turned out to be less than 50 per cent efficient.

Occasionally he gives us telling new insights, like the fact that the CEGB has the largest unallocated stockpile of separated plutonium in the non-communist world or the Board's mindless optimism over the commissioning of Dungeness B devastatingly illustrated in a table. Occasionally there are some minor errors and facts already out-of-date (it is no longer the case that 'all the major unions except the mineworkers' are in favour of nuclear power).

But all in all it is a good partial account (why does the cover blurb have to insist on the myth of objectivity?). For the anti-nuclear cognoscenti, *Atomic Crossroads* will be a useful reminder and reference; for the uninitiated it provides as good a route into the subject as any.

Rob Edwards

Sooner than you think

Peter Ebsworth

On the train journey home,
an old man opposite me
appears shorter than he used to be.
He was probably always that way,
just as my father has got shorter
as I have grown older.

It is late summer,
and the old man is dressed in preparation
for every cold spell which could arrive.
A cloth cap, an overcoat, a smart striped
shirt buttoned up to the top, and something
extra in maroon, tucked underneath his trousers.

I find his boy scout senility touching.
This may seem too harsh a word,
although I do not intend it as a jibe,
having already experienced
what it means to unpack the shopping
and put the toilet rolls in the fridge.

I arrive back at my flat,
and while fixing myself a drink,
drop my only ice cube
onto the kitchen floor.
I rinse it under the hot tap.
Carelessly it disappears.

The Energy Fix

ANDY PORTER, MARTIN SPENCE and ROY THOMPSON *Pluto Press* £5.95

Britain is rich in energy resources, from the Atlantic waves to the oilfields of Dorset, but no British government has ever produced a policy for harnessing this wealth or for making sure it is used wisely. *The Energy Fix* is a contribution to setting up a socialist energy policy. The best compliment that can be paid to it is that its authors obviously realise the huge scale of the task.

Conservative politicians delight in announcing that Britain has no energy policy, which is simply a shorthand way of announcing that they have one they dare not own up to. Part of the policy is raw opportunism, like selling off such portable goods as British Gas or Enterprise Oil. At the same time, a declared policy of not interfering in decisions best left to the market actually equals a series of choices in favour of the oil companies and the nuclear industry and against energy consumers, energy efficiency and, of course, the coal industry and coal miners.

It might seem as though a socialist energy policy would more or less write itself once this example is made clear: just hold a mirror up to everything the Tories have done and see what appears. But Porter, Spence and Thompson realise that there is more to the problem than this. For a start, Labour governments have their own political debts just as surely as Conservative ones do — not least to the major unions with members in the electricity supply industry, which have traditionally been as pro-nuclear as any director of GEC. And the Labour Party is all too often in the business of showing that it can provide more growth than the Tories, not thinking about how much of what is desirable.

This discouraging record, however, may not be a true guide to what happens next. The sight of Labour's environment secretary, John Cunningham, trying to talk his way out of a party conference commitment against nuclear power is not too edifying. But, as the sounds he makes become more absurd, the chance that a Labour government would follow his uncritical pro-industry line becomes more slender. The power unions are starting to appreciate that nuclear power stations need fewer power workers just as surely as they do away with the need for miners. And issues like fuel poverty and the forthcoming sale of British Gas open doors for Labour to make an impression by comparison with a Tory party which does no more than look after its friends. *The Energy Fix* takes in all these issues, and puts them in their vital world context, in a way designed to make the book important reading for anyone interested in an energy policy for Britain. A pity it was finalised before the 1985 Labour conference vote against nuclear power.

Martin Ince

The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s

ed. JOHN OSMOND *Gomer* £6

Support for the Falklands War was much stronger in England than in Scotland or Wales. Many Scots and Welsh noted and disliked Mrs Thatcher's frequent lapses from talking of 'Great Britain' into talking of 'England'. Great Britain has certainly known imperialism, but when *patriotism* is evoked then somehow 'British' sounds wrong — it is 'English'

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that is often said and more often meant. Orwell argued famously in his 'Lion and the Unicorn' that patriotism should not be scorned by the Left, but seized and used by it. Yet he too talked only of English patriotism.

Labour should not let the Tories steal the patriotic card for ever; but Labour's patriotism should, reflecting its bedrock support and sense of roots, be a patriotism of the nations. We English have a lot to learn about the other nations. Text books on British Government are only just beginning to make token references to the national institutions of Scotland and Wales. I have sat on GCE examination boards where it has been solemnly argued that to include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 'would overload the syllabus', as if truth must always play second fiddle to easily assessable English facts. I am not reviewing this excellent, thoughtful and important book on the Welsh identity. I'm simply giving the reason for reading it. The question is complicated,but then 'Britishness' as 'Englishness' is a cruel simplification. In geographical Wales there are three distinct areas and outlooks: the Welsh-speaking North and West, the Welsh-feeling but English-speaking valleys and the South-Eastern section now thoroughly Anglicised. The book has no single thesis. Different voices attack the same and then different questions. For once, here is a model anthology, informative and thought-provoking.

Bernard Crick

Tom Paine: The Greatest Exile
DAVID POWELL *Croom Helm* £18.95

In 1809 Paine was buried on his farm at New Rochelle in America. His neighbour Margaret Bonneville, standing by his grave-side, exclaimed, 'Oh! Mr Paine. My son stands here as testimony for the gratitude of America, I for France.' England was not mentioned; and yet, as the title of this excellent biography suggests, Paine was held by many to be England's greatest exile.

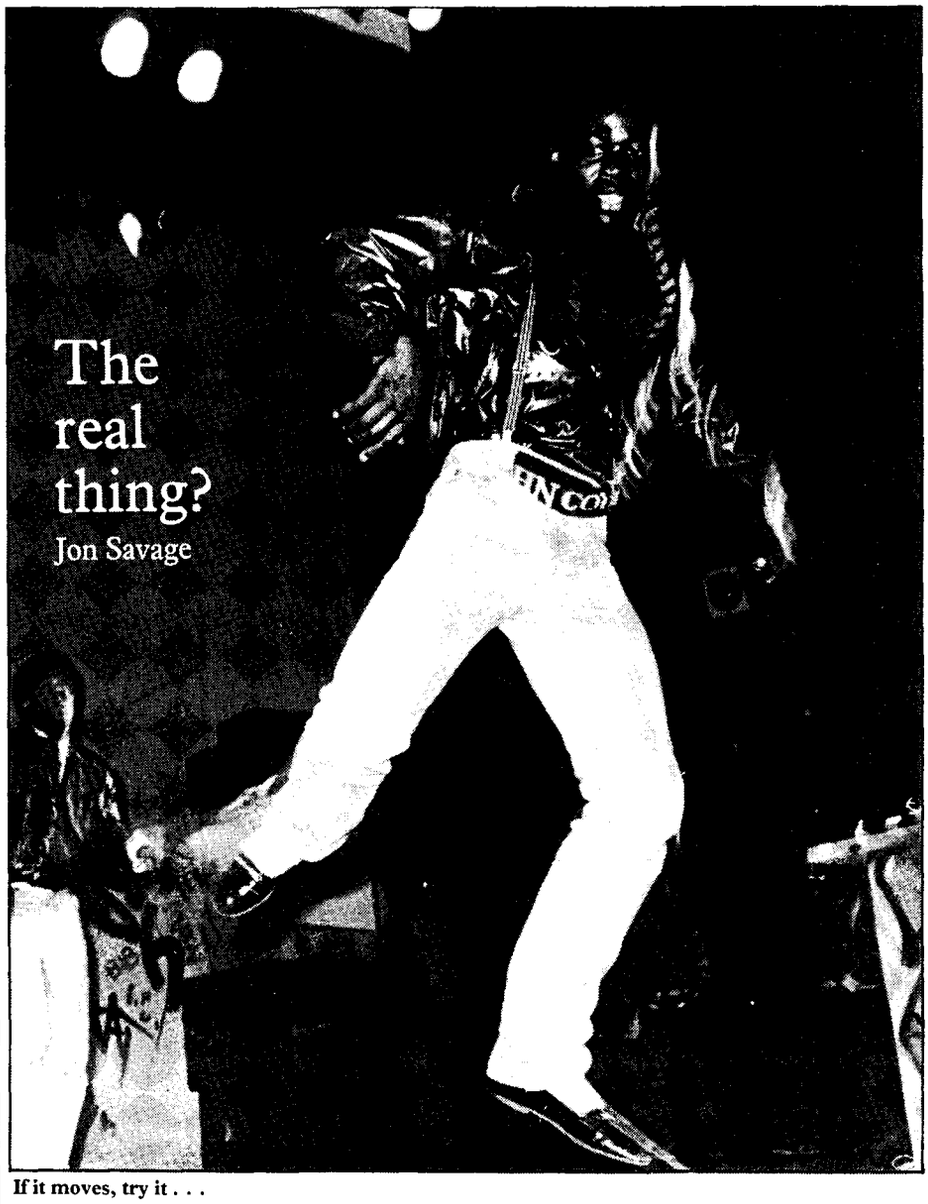
Paine's life is an extraordinary story. Before he sailed for Philadelphia in 1774 at the age of 37, he had been a stay-maker, exciseman, tobacconist, seaman and schoolmaster. He was to become the first US Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and a member of the National Convention of 1794 in Paris where he pleaded for the life of Louis XVI. His writings, particularly the *Rights of Man*, established him as a major radical thinker and, some would contest, the pre-eminent philosopher of the Age of Reason. He wrote against slavery and for the emancipation of women. He opposed Burke's philosophy and advocated 'liberty, property, security and resistance to aggression' as the rights of every man.

David Powell's gift is his ability to create the different backgrounds of Paine's life and to convince us of their reality. He describes a London where the labour force was constituted chiefly of children, 'cheap, malleable and totally expendable', of the emerging USA and of revolutionary France. He describes with restrained passion Paine's deep disillusion with the French Revolution. Paine believed that the moment formal government is abolished 'society begins to act — to produce common security'. In Paris, what he witnessed, and suffered himself, was terror.

Towards the end, the French who had given him citizenship called him English; the English outlawed him for encouraging the liberties of France; the Americans disowned him by refusing to decide where he belonged. Finally it was left to his fellow-radical, William Cobbett, to disinter his bones and return them to England 'to light a taper for liberty'; but they got lost once here. No matter: it is Paine's spirit that must survive.

Brian Martin

MUSIC



The real thing?

Jon Savage

Anna Arnone

If it moves, try it . . .

White artists get praised for originality; Blacks are expected merely to be 'authentic', true to their 'roots'

DURING A RECENT visit to Manhattan I saw a peculiar sight. In a half-empty club, somewhere in the mid-teens, a couple of young Black men were breaking athletically to the usual hip-hop mix. Then the DJ put on Iron Butterfly's *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, 17 minutes of white sludge-rock from 1968, a record you would have thought utterly alien to them. The dancers cocked their ears, looked at each other, essayed a few tentative steps — and then, in total contrast to their previous style, began to snake in a manner wholly appropriate to the music's florid arabesques.

If it moves, try it; if it works, use it.

The synthetic properties of modern Black dance music are rarely celebrated by white commentators. To many, there is something suspicious in its celebration of the 'artificial'. The Campaign For Real Soul prefers to isolate Black music that is full of 'soul', 'passion', 'commitment', 'roots', music that is enjoyed by small but definable minorities, Black or white. Much modern Black music — especially hip-hop, with its fundamental reliance on electronics — is found to be devoid of these qualities: assembly-line fodder, tainted by impure elements.

You could be forgiven for thinking that this is only the latest twist to the classic 'authenticity' argument so enmeshed in conventional left theories about popular music, and you would be right. It's no accident that many white groups attempting to mix pop music and radical politics — like the Redskins or the Style Council — refer back to 60s or early 70s models of Black music (much as, in the late 70s, people referred to reggae), forgetting that, for their time, Motown and Stax were as synthetic — assembly-line even — as Tommy Boy or 4th and Broadway.

Hip-hop (using the term here in its widest sense, to cover a variety of Black dance forms from the Heavy Metal Rap of Def Jam, to the

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Electro of Tommy Boy, to the new Latin styles coming from Miami) did not originate in Louisiana juke joints: it is a style — and an approach to culture — that has its origin in chance and paradox. There are few stranger stories in popular music than the way that Black New Yorkers invented a new musical style from an obscure, German, synthesised disco record, but this is exactly what happened when Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force lifted *Planet Rock* virtually note for note from Kraftwerk's *Trans-Europe Express* in 1982.

A simultaneous development, popularised that same year by Grandmaster Flash's *Wheels Of Steel* could have come straight from the pages of William Burroughs. *Wheels of Steel* cut up five different pop/disco records and introduced to a wider audience (as did Malcolm McLaren's *Buffalo Girls*) the idea of 'scratching', whereby the noise of a record scratched or reversed on a turntable became a piece of music in itself, usually a percussive repetition. This was a direct extension of live DJ expertise of the late 70s/early 80s where obsolete funk records with percussive breaks were scratched into new rhythm tracks (for further explanation of this process, see David Toop's excellent *Rap Attack*, from Pluto).

Four years on, these twin developments have turned even the standard hip-hop record into a vertiginous amalgam. A 1986 12" like Janice's *Bye Bye* will, on the 'dub' side, feature a synthesised vocal line sounding not unlike the Chipmunks (old B-Boy favourites); Syndrums; a percussion break transcribed direct from *Trans-Europe Express*; another vocal line that is a cross between a tribal chant and a doo-wop chorus; and, finally, a bridge that is a direct quote from *The Addams Family* TV theme.

This is a sophisticated mixture, immensely pleasurable and brilliantly constructed: as the term 'dub' denotes, much hip-hop is beginning to describe the same inner space as did reggae in the mid/late 70s. And, if you look, the resistance so beloved by white critics is still there in hip-hop: the 'found' elements in the style come from a genuine 'folk' practice, and the very public use of the music — that annoying clatter of the street beatbox is *deliberate* — and its coded lyrics invert Anglo-Saxon expectations of both privacy and language.

The theory of authenticity is as irrelevant to modern Black dance music as it is to pop in general: to insist on it is to deny that Blacks can have an attitude to popular culture as complex and as cerebral as whites, and to ignore the fact that many people, both Black and white, want a popular music that not only reflects, but celebrates and amplifies the confusions and complexities of contemporary urban living. □

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THEATRE

The way we were

Benedict Nightingale

Real Dreams
TREVOR GRIFFITHS *Pit*
Chess
TIM RICE, BENNY ANDERSSON, BJORN ULVAEUS *Prince Edward*

WE HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH from Trevor Griffiths of late, and that's a pity, since no dramatist on the Left better combines incisiveness and heart, none has written about the urgency of political change with greater sophistication of mind or generosity of spirit. Those qualities mark his **Real Dreams**, too, though it's not always easy to discern them. How could it be otherwise when the play's protagonists range from the muddled and naive to the floundering and foolish, and regard lucid argument and clear analysis with mistrust, preferring the shambling idiom of the right-on generation to the language of a supposedly corrupt establishment?

The time is 1969, the setting a commune in the Cleveland grot. The inhabitants, five male and four female, belong to an organisation which Students for a Democratic Society would no doubt reject as excessively radical, but the Weathermen maybe find not hard enough. They want to reach the local working class, they want to contact fellow-revolutionaries. They're less articulate than him, with their 'aw shit, man', 'I can dig on that', and so on; but they'd seem ideologically akin to the character in Griffiths's *Party* who sees hope for the future, less in marshalling disciplined battalions, more in identifying with the struggles of the Blacks, the urban poor, the Third World dispossessed and other oppressed groups.

So what should they do when a strutting Puerto Rican in vaguely military garb instructs them instantly to prove their solidarity by burning down that symbol of economic imperialism, the neighbourhood A and P store? Understandably, they demur, complaining that the proposed action is unplanned. But what when Ramon, as he's called, flies into an almighty tantrum, deriding their revolutionary credentials? This time, they give in and drive with their molotov cocktails to what turns out to be a comically abortive raid, with Ramon himself drunkenly making obscene gestures at a motorist who has spotted the would-be saboteurs. Nor are the demands on them finished. What should they do when the Puerto Ricans insist on 'interrogating' one of their number as a suspected spy, and threaten to massacre the entire commune if this request is denied? Suddenly, the radicals find themselves ranged with guns against the very people they're hoping to liberate: 'This is fucking waggon-trail — we're protecting our goddam womenfolk from the savages, when what we're supposed to be doing is joining the savages.'

Somehow Griffiths resists the temptation to mock as thoroughly as he resists that to romanticise. He doesn't disguise the callow attitudinising, the macho bravado, or the contradictions and hypocrisies to be found in the commune. He doesn't pretend there isn't something absurd in talking violently about smashing the pig-state from the Louis Seize sofa your mother has given you, or begging to help burn down a supermarket because 'I've got to get into the heavy shit sometime — I'm 27, and I've never even been busted yet'; and Michele Costa, Adrian Dunbar and the other members of Ron Daniels's admirable cast don't shirk from showing the characters' assorted immaturities. Yet the feeling is never allowed to evaporate that these are sincere if confused young people, making principled sacrifices in conscientious hopes of changing a world which genuinely afflicts them with pain, disgust and guilt. They're dreamers, as western history in the last 20 years has proved; but they are, in the careful phrasing of the title, *real* dreamers, dreaming substantial dreams, dreams which 'will not go away'.

Chess is the latest proof that British musicals are getting bigger, dearer, visually grander, but not often better. To be sure, it begins marvellously, with Eastern warriors in gorgeous silver and gold armour impassively doing battle on a board, to a chorus wryly describing the game's equally chequered history. But then it's off to an Alpine resort where a choir from *The Sound of Music* waits to greet those contesting the world chess championships, and the problems begin. The show's opening joke, in which the welcoming committee transfers its attentions from the American challenger to a passing backpacker, falls pretty flat, since it's not clear that the offhand young man singing inaudible lyrics in the vague direction of Elaine Paige *is* the American challenger. And even when that confusion is tidied up we aren't left with anything that could confidently be called a plot.

Well, let's not exaggerate. The first-act contest between Murray Head and Tommy Korberg, playing the American and Russian champions respectively, has its arresting and even its credible moments. Indeed, I wish Tim Rice had shown us still more of the former's paranoid anti-communism, the latter's nervous exasperation. Instead he makes the crucial mistake of introducing romantic interest in the chunky form of Paige, and all becomes implausible. She begins as the nasty American's girlfriend and spokesperson, if you'll believe it, and then, if you'll believe it, transfers her affections to Korberg, helping him defect to Britain at the hour of victory. Nor are her assaults on the belief-glands over yet.

When a new Russian grandmaster comes to challenge Korberg in Act Two, her Hungarian origins suddenly become important. Her dad (if you'll believe it) may have been festering in a Soviet labour-camp since 1956 and may be released if her lover throws the match. At the same time the blackmailing Soviets import Korberg's abandoned wife to Bangkok, where

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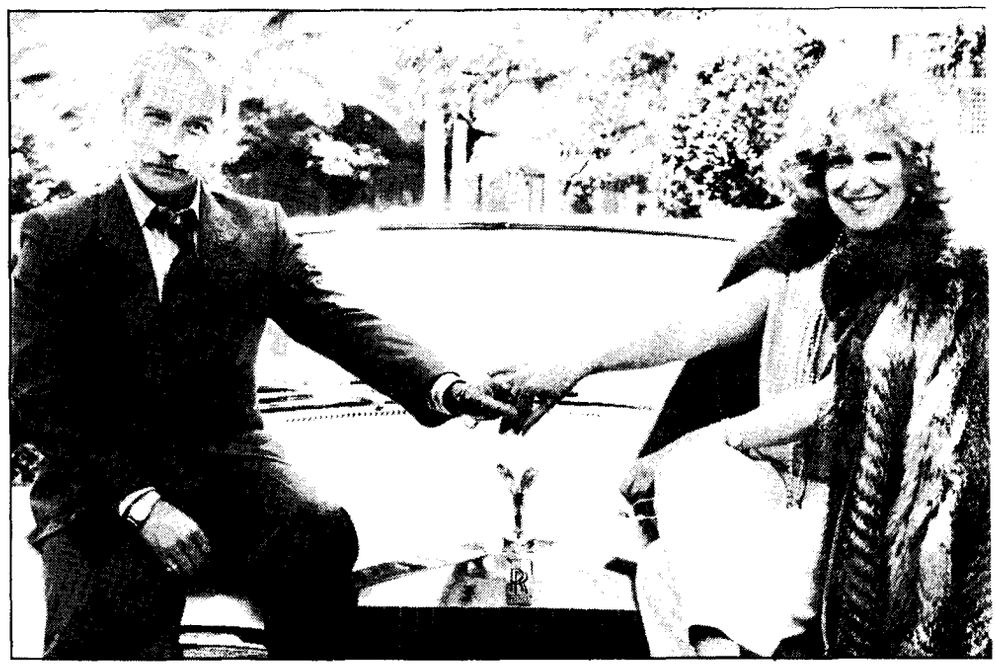
the contest occurs, insinuating that disaster will strike her if he doesn't prove cooperative. This dastardly plot is opposed by Head, who (if you'll believe it) reappears transformed first into a vicious TV interviewer, then into rather a nice, helpful chap; and so to a still more puzzling denouement. Korberg wins, either because he believes mediocrity must be defeated, or because a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do, or both, or neither; and he leaves Paige and returns to Russia, again for no clear or consistent reason. All that seems certain is that power-politics are like chess, and rather beastly, and to be resisted.

No one is likely to find this worth disagreeing with — but then those visiting the show mostly won't be looking for mental stimulus or argument or (I fear) even sense. They'll be interested in Andersson and Ulvaeus's music, which has melody and verve, and the spectacle unstintingly and sometimes splendidly created by Trevor Nunn's direction and Robin Wagner's designs. And yet when a whole Buddhist temple materialised, complete with monks, just to provide a setting for Korberg briefly to talk chess with the regenerate Head, I caught myself wondering about that too. Isn't *Chess* an awful lot of ado about awfully little? □



Richard Dreyfuss and Bette Midler expressing their personality

FILMS

Money, money money

Adam Mars-Jones

Down and Out in Beverly Hills
Odeon, Leicester Square

DOWN AND OUT in Beverly Hills, despite its title, deals not with poverty but with the anxieties of affluence. Paul Mazursky's moderately funny film is based on *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, but credits René Fauchois' play rather than the film Jean Renoir made of it. There is a certain justice to this, since Fauchois threatened to sue Renoir for inflating the attractiveness of his tramp Boudu at the expense of the bourgeois who saves his life and takes him in. Mazursky's Boudu, Jerry (played by Nick Nolte), has a greatly attenuated charisma.

The household that gives him an equivocal welcome has been yanked up the social scale: Dave and Barbara Whiteman (played by Richard Dreyfuss and Bette Midler) are somewhere between rich and super-rich. They will cross this final barrier any week now, when Dave's advanced coat-hangers take the Chinese market by storm.

Dreyfuss and Midler talk about the roles as if wealth was a foreign country to them. 'I'll really miss playing Dave Whiteman,' says Dreyfuss in the press kit. 'I'll miss his Rolex watch. I'll miss his Rolls-Royce, and I'll miss all of his jewellery.' Some day soon this actor, who has appeared in a couple of the most popular films of all time, must learn to charge for his services. I realise press kits are written by word processors in their spare time. The point is that wealth, particularly in America, can seem to become a pure expression of personality.

Paul Mazursky at least admits that in his film he was 'making fun of my own life, so to speak'. The trouble is that the fun is so indulgent. For the situation to have real bite, the tramp must represent a conflicting set of values, a vigour which the sophisticates have lost and may envy but which can still disrupt their lives.

The character of Jerry has no such logic. It is the product of a number of fragmentary scenarios: one in which the fear that circumstance dictates character is exorcised (shades of *Trading Places*); another in which people project their fantasies onto a blank (shades of *Being There*); a third in which an attractive stranger seduces an entire household, both liberating and destroying it (shades of *Theorem*).

At the end of the film Jerry confesses that he has lied to everyone, that he isn't an orphan, never spent time in an ashram in Oregon, never lost a sister to leukaemia. He gives as his reason for lying: 'Real heartbreak . . . real sorrow is boring.' This may be true, but the result is that poverty in the film is inauthentic. A lapse from affluence becomes indistinguishable from a personality defect.

The clearest example in the film of the fantasy that wealth is an emanation of personality comes when Dave's gardener recommends that he takes a vacation, and offers to help. 'You can borrow my condo on Hawaii anytime,' he says. In a world where gardeners are plutocrats, poverty is an aberration.

At the end of *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux* the tramp, reaching out for a water lily, capsizes the boat containing the party that is celebrating his wedding. Everyone reaches the shore, but Boudu changes clothes with a scarecrow and wanders off. When Jerry makes his plunge into Dave's pool, it's because Dave has pushed him in. The next day he moves out, taking the Whiteman's maladjusted dog with him. Before he's a block away the Whitemans have filed out onto the sidewalk and are beaming at him. He mumbles to the dog, 'Let's go get ourselves a cappuccino,' and returns to the house. All file into the house, though Dave's face suddenly clouds over.

This contradictory sequence of expulsion, renewed welcome, then failing geniality, is an attempt to reconcile the various fragmentary scenarios, according to which Jerry is simultaneously invader, saviour and nuisance. But by rights the falling expression should be on Jerry's face and not Dave's. This Boudu has been recruited not to share wealth but simply to witness it.

Hollywood comedies about poverty are thin on the ground. But even Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels*, for all its compromises, at least sees that the wealthy cannot find poverty even when they want to and that when they do find it they cannot easily escape its ecology. But the penalties of slumming seem to have declined since the Thirties. Richard Dreyfuss, hanging out with bums on the beach, loses nothing but Barbara's small-minded approval, while Joel McCrea in *Sullivan's Travels* soon found himself on a chain gang.

In Europe, one of the privileges of having a privilege is not to be made aware of it. In America, these days, privilege loses it savour unless you can be constantly reminded of it. Sometimes this is a matter of subtle distinction: guests on the 'concierge level' of American hotels are likely to reach their super-secure floor by means of a special key in the communal lift (in Europe there would be separate lifts). Sometimes the contrasts are brutal: a chic eatery in New York has PEOPLE STARVE ON THIS BLOCK stencilled on the wall. This message was intended as denunciation, but functions almost as an advertisement. And in Paul Mazursky's sweetly liberal film, a family guarantees itself a permanent frisson by installing in its earthly paradise an internal exile from money. □

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RECORDS

Strauss: Ein Heldenleben
KARAJAN *Deutsche Grammophon*
415 508-2

On his most recent visit to London in 1985, Von Karajan conducted an account of *Ein Heldenleben* that, at least for the duration of the performance, managed by its sheer persuasiveness to convince the audience that it was listening to great music and that all one's misgivings about Richard Strauss and this piece in particular were groundless. The self-proclaiming grandeur, the conceit which believes that music can be used as an all-embracing pictorial language, the unmitigated bad taste: Karajan swept all those aside and, with a combination of symphonic sweep and total fidelity to the musical text, turned truly base metal into gold.

The performance here is equally overwhelming. The Berlin Philharmonic plays as a single, multi-faceted unit, alive to every minor inflection of Karajan's baton; the closing pages are miraculously controlled. But everyone is let down by the recording quality, which lacks definition and presence; where the music should come at you, it remains hidden behind an aural veil, though for many the near-perfection of the interpretation will outweigh the other shortcomings.

Strauss: Eine Alpensinfonie
HAITINK *Philips* 416 156-2

The problems of the *Alpine Symphony* are even more difficult to overcome than those of *Heldenleben*. No one, save the most rabid Straussian, would claim that the piece is evenly inspired, or that there are not moments when all questions of musical propriety must be set aside; the real debate would centre on whether the good outweighs the bad and on how convincingly the structure hangs together as a symphony. Haitink concentrates on that symphonic coherence; he does not lavish attention on the niceties of textural refinement, though with such a consummate orchestra as the Concertgebouw under his direction the sound is a constant joy. Even the most protracted passages of illustration acquire a thematic conviction and, for all the tonal beauty of some sections and the intensity of the instrumental solos, there is always the sense of each element being fitted into an overall plan. The recording is rich and finely detailed, emphasising again the lack of focus in Karajan's *Heldenleben*.

Andrew Clements

TELEVISION: FILMS

Fitting image

Geoff Dyer

HE HAS MADE FILMS with John Berger, Raymond Williams, Charles Tomlinson, Peter Fuller and C. L. R. James; he has made programmes about Cuban culture, drawing, cinema, literature and sport; he has made series about art, time and the nature of play. He is a socialist and one of the most innovative filmmakers working in television — and the ICA in London has been showing a retrospective selection of his work.

Mike Dibb joined BBC Music and Arts in the wave-cresting days of 1967 when the department was learning to borrow the freedoms of the artists and musicians about whom it was making programmes. Until then, television's coverage of cinema had been negligible; Dibb directed films on Antonioni, Renoir and Godard. He also made films about painters and, in 1972, in collaboration with Berger, he directed what has become the most provocatively influential series on art ever made for British TV: *Ways of Seeing*.

Although most people's contact has been with the book of the same name, rather than the series, *Ways of Seeing* is, before anything else, superb television. Berger's commentary is unswervingly didactic and polemical; camerawork and editing are deft, suggestive and delicate. What later emerge as distinct hallmarks of Dibb's style are already there in fairly developed form in 1972.

He has a masterly knack for visual argument. Discussion is not decorated with images but constructed through them. Ideas are turned into compelling narrative, enacted through editing and juxtaposition rather than simply explained. Sound and vision tug at each other, coaxing out extra significance. An image slightly precedes the word that will explain it. You watch in a state of perpetual expectation which is simply another phrase for active absorption — following clues instead of being led by the nose. In a film made later, the painter Robert Natkin talks of using the tongue of his eye; Dibb's is an eloquent eye.

Such visual agility does not exist for its own sake (if Dibb has a weakness, it is for a too contrived detachment, a too pointed casualness) but as a means of discovering the full expressive content of his subjects. The series *About Time* (1985), directed by Dibb and Christopher Rawlence, tries to find visual equivalents for synchronous, dislocated, non-sequential temporal rhythms; *Seeing through Drawing* (1978) attempts to contain the patient labour of artists sketching; a film about the squash player Jonah Barrington (1976) concentrates on the tension on his face, the muscles straining in his legs, and attempts through swiftly changing camera angles to make the viewer participate in the game's sweat-drenched strategies.

Dibb is distiguished not just by his filmic skill but by his intellectual sensitivity, range and depth. He does not make film profiles of artists or writers; he makes films with them, developing and expanding on their ideas. He doesn't simplify, he elaborates, foregrounding politico-cultural issues usually ignored by television. His film about Natkin examines the relation between artist and critic, art and psychoanalysis through the writing of Peter Fuller. A film on Alicia Alonso and the Cuban National Ballet explores the uses to which high culture is put in post-revolutionary Cuba.

Mike Dibb: 'an eloquent eye'

What then of Dibb's own work in relation to a larger framework of cultural representation in the mass media? While arts coverage on TV has always been ostensibly flexible, the ideological underpinning of the consensus of taste within broadcasting has meant that he has been working, tacitly, against the grain. Even after the success of *Ways of Seeing*, Berger and Dibb's next project — based on Berger's study of migrant labour, *A Seventh Man* — was blocked. Dibb's series *Fields of Play*, first proposed in 1969, was not made until 1980; his film with Raymond Williams of *The Country and the City* was proposed in 1973 and eventually squeezed into a documentary series six years later.

If Dibb now enjoys considerable freedom it is not only because he has managed to create a space for himself within an existing cultural formation; it is also because of a more general shift in the orientation of cultural broadcasting — a shift to which Dibb has himself contributed. *Arena* (and its one-time editor Alan Yentob — now head of Music and Arts)

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has enjoyed considerable prestige as an arts forum but that position of prominence grew out of a tradition forged by editors like Leslie Megahey (*Omnibus*) and producers like Dibb. By making programmes, in other words, Dibb has also helped prepare a platform for this own and other people's programmes.

Similarly, Dibb's work has always shown the influence of theorists such as Williams, Stuart Hall and Stuart Hood. Such figures have been a marginal influence on the BBC (which Dibb left to go independent in 1983) but are much more central to the orientation of Channel 4. A liberal view may see Channel 4 as representing the institutionalisation of this alternative/dissenting cultural tradition; a harsher view sees it as having been simultaneously marginalised.

'Radical' filmmakers were active in the planning of Channel 4 but once *it* came into existence *they* became (not surprisingly) preoccupied with making their individual programmes. While producers can enjoy some new editorial freedom within Channel 4, the larger aim of changing the cultural prerogatives of broadcasting as a whole remains remote. That can only be worked towards through an informed alliance of editors, producers, previewers, critics and viewers. The Left is still developing this kind of integrated strategy, but already the work of Mike Dibb can be seen as having set a pioneering example. □

A selection of Mike Dibb's films is being shown at 7.30 on Sundays, until 1 June, at the ICA in London.

TELEVISION

Not so remote

Hugo Williams

THE GHOSTLY remote-control film of the aftermath of the first fatal nuclear accident — at Idaho Falls in 1961 — was used by Diane Orr to excellent effect in her dramatic documentary **SL-1: A New Way To Die** (BBC2). Sequences of the rescue workers carrying out stricken operators had been slowed down, as if to prefigure their doom. They looked like moon-walkers: 'astronauts of the nuclear age', according to the eulogy.

The third team to try and get through the fallout finds one man 'impaled on the ceiling' and another pinned to the floor by shrapnel, his body embedded with radioactive Xenon and Crypton isotopes, his head emitting over 400 renkins an hour. He shudders in the freezing Idaho night that will be his last. A man adjusts his head on the stretcher and is himself fatally contaminated. The nurse who takes his pulse is similarly affected.

'It was a beautiful ambulance to start with,' said a hospital worker who had to supervise its gutting. 'We had to send it to Portland, Oregon, to have it rebuilt.' This was horror indeed but 'at no time was there any serious hazard to people in the vicinity of the SL-1 site,' went the inevitable spokesman, while Ms Orr's commentary pointed out that 1961 safety limits would be repeatedly modified.

It was thought important that the casualties be given military burials rather than disposed of in nuclear waste dumps, so the radioactive areas of their bodies had to be removed. 'A local shop prepared knives on poles. The doctors wore aprons weighing 45lbs . . .' 'I tried to save as much tissue as I could,' said the doctor. 'He was so hot. I just hope I never see another individual that hot.' The human nuclear waste was likewise incarcerated in lead and bulldozed into the landscape. Should such material be forwarded to the sun for disposal? No, because it might fall back on us. Altogether 790 people were exposed to radiation in the 18 months it took to tidy up, many of whom have developed lung, throat and colon cancers.

The film was followed by the usual studio scrap in which the usual prejudices and jargon prevented one from deciding anything for oneself. Am I to believe the man who says energy conservation (stuffy rooms) and car exhausts are 'many thousand of times' more dangerous than friendly old nuclear silos? Diane Orr didn't really have to say much to carry the motion: cut into her film at strategic points were clues that one of the dead operators, an unreliable depressive of the kind usually employed by atomic energy plants, might well have caused the explosion on purpose in a whimsical suicide bid. 'I don't know *why* the rod was withdrawn beyond the point where . . .,' said the spokesman; 'he'd have to have had a death wish is all that I can

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envision.' '(Envision' because he was glowing in the dark presumably'.) Orr's case was simple: reactor design may improve or it may not; human nature remains the same; if anything it deteriorates. Rounding off a debate marked in equal parts by impotence and alarm, the beady Nick Ross reassured us that we were receiving more radioactivity from our TV sets and each other than we were from Chernobyl. Ha Ha Ugh . . .

A welcome new anti-TV series **Open The Box** (C4) seems determined to prove to its sponsors that television is a less influential medium than received wisdom has hitherto taken for granted. Twenty volunteer homes had been fitted up with a spying device which automatically started filming them as soon as anyone switched the telly on. The results, it has to be said, were neither unexpected nor interesting in their own right. The reasons for this are obvious. People feel disinclined to have their usual Saturday anal intercourse in front of a telly that is observing their every move, even if it *is* Channel 4. It is possible that subjects actually left the room more often than they would otherwise have done, producing a distorted record of viewer absenteeism. Among other expectations duly fulfilled were the facts that people cuddle, hoover and fight in front of the box. One man made the mistake of practising the flute while Chuck Berry was playing the guitar, but perhaps he was insane. The show went to unnecessary lengths to prove that, when a programme is over, people get up to make a cup of tea or have a pee by interviewing the men at the Water Works and Electricity Board who have ten seconds after *Coronation Street* ends to cater for our increased needs in these areas.

Although there was some film of couples skirmishing for the remote-control console, 'in most houses the battle had already been fought in favour of the man'. The programme here offered the thought that a console was a mediaeval symbol of authority, sitting on the arm of Daddy's chair: women watch TV in a 'different way' — working or keeping an eye on the needs of the family. They feel the material they like has a lower status, although it affects them more. 'Is it real or fantasy?' was another question to which I guessed everyone's answer: 'Fantasy, of course.' (But only because you're asking me.)

Most hateable man for ages was the spokesman on the programme for More O' Ferral (nickname: More Awful), the people who stick up advertising eyesores in the countryside for money. 'Of course I would take money from *ASH* as well as cigarette companies,' reasoned this executive attaché case, 'but I wouldn't put up the hoardings facing each other.' Oh, why not? You should, you vehement little spiv. Telly space flogging was revealed too as hardly more dignified than a phone-booth double-glazing business: 'Is that Radio Rentals? We've got a bash-the-box scam coming off, how about a quarter?' 'OK.' The said firm's 'abandon submarine' commercial, which slotted in here nicely, seemed to say more about the medium in 15 seconds than this series is likely to in months on the present showing.

Thanks, *Open the Box*, but I think I'll take the money. □

Under the axe

Naseem Khan

CONFERENCES USUALLY produce paper like the mill of the folk tale churned out salt. Little wonder that one that simply produced a picture sticks in the memory.

It was a large, felt-tip drawing. In the background stood a fancy mansion, shut in by ornate, iron railings. In the foreground a modest van drove along the road. The gracious building, the group explained, stood for drama schools; the van was a Theatre in Education (TiE) team going about its business. The fence in between is obvious, as is the moral: despite the burgeoning of TiE, despite the growth of community theatre and despite the Arts Council's new policy in favour of increased work in theatre for young people, virtually no vocational drama school provides a course especially for this type of work. Even more striking — and the point of this column — is the fact that the one and only drama school providing, besides much else, a Community Theatre course has — to its bewilderment — been told it will have to close down.

Rose Bruford College, set up in 1950 in suburban Sidcup, has proved the most serious casualty of the current assault upon public-sector Higher Education. There are, to put it in context, others: Brighton and Newcastle Polytechnics have been told to lose their humanities courses; Leeds Poly (springboard for Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth) will have to give up Fine Arts; in the so-called 'hard' disciplines, Sunderland Poly will lose its engineering department, as will Wolverhampton. All this is part of a general plan by the National Advisory Board (which advises Keith Joseph) to cut back Higher Education places by 10,000 in order to cater for a shortfall that, it assesses, will be around £23m. in 1987/8.

The larger polytechnics will muster their armies and their muscle. It would be a mistake, however, if the case of Rose Bruford failed to be heard amidst the noise of battle. It is a unique college.

Physically, it's a small place, which is the main trouble: demanded student cuts will bring its total down to what is considered an untenable level. The college takes only 60 students a year (the present total is 168) for its hotly contended courses, of which Community Theatre is only one. Rose Bruford is also the only college to offer a BA in 'Theatre Arts' and — a new development — a three-year course in Technical Theatre Arts.

It is, however, the Community Theatre course that is undoubtedly the most pioneering, the link between the arts and education that Rose Bruford herself built into the college 36 years ago. It doesn't take place in a vacuum. In January this year, almost on its tenth anniversary, the course moved out to a disused school in Greenwich that offers far more opportunities for presenting and devising work *in situ*. There have been a number of concrete results: an original musical for the unemployed; a participatory schools programme on the industrial revolution; a pre-school story show; a pub show; a musical for the mentally ill; a reworking of a Shakespeare play for youth clubs — all demonstrations of the potential range of community-theatre work and useful training for the future. 'At Rose Bruford,' said one of its ex-students, now writing a large-scale community opera, 'we talked about the world, not the actor as a person. The fact I'm doing this kind of work rather than trying to sell plays round the reps all the time is largely due to them.'

It's been largely due to Bruford that other groups have come into existence: groups like Theatre of Black Women and Double Edge. 'We encourage students,' said deputy-principal Phil Robins, 'to form their own companies rather than wait for people to give them work.' A larger proportion of students than is usual at drama schools is Black (about 10 per cent at present) and most came there through having encountered the activities of the Commupity Theatre teams.

All in all, it is a strikingly good example of theatre training for our times — one given, ironically, high praise in a recent confidential HMI visit. The Children's Theatre Association conference earlier this year (where the picture at the start of this column emerged) was scathing about the way in which most drama schools ('an elite training for an elite') ignored the complex field of working for young people, leaving it too frequently to people with the air of 'born again Sunday school teachers'. It is unlikely that a Sunday school teacher would be found at Rose Bruford.

There are reservations, inevitably. Above all, the distinction between Rose Bruford's two acting courses — the degree and the community course — seems to perpetuate the idea of a divide between community actors and 'the proper ones'. It is unfortunate, in that context, that the bulk of Bruford's Black actors enrol on the community course. But, even taking that into consideration, the overall product is far too valuable to go down the drain.

●

SOME TIME AGO Work in Progress alerted readers to the coming of a national centre for circus skills. Well, folks, it's here. Lucky people in Bristol can enrol for a series of courses that start on 2 June. Among courses on offer, the Spagetti Brothers teach the Tricks of the Trade and Franki Anderson teaches Acrobatics, Balances and Tumbling. And, just in case you think this is all up in the air, they deal with Arts Management too. Send an s.a.e. for full details to Richard at Fool Time, 40 Thomas St, Bristol BS2 9LL (0272-556452/28308). They also sell devil sticks and diavolos. Sound handy. □

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Mother's ruin

Anon.

IN THE 1930s my mother, witty, defensive and also, then, a Beauty, exchanged her kitchen maid's apron for a farmer's wife's pinny. Presumably, at the time, it seemed to be A Move In The Right Direction. Alas, not so. For her remaining 40 years she lived, trapped and embittered, on an isolated farm, devoted to babies but indifferent to the children they became, consoled only by the fortnightly visits of the County Travelling Library and, eventually, by drink.

Countless families tacitly conspire to hide a skeleton or two and we were no exception. My mother, already furnished regularly with tranquillisers on 'repeat' prescriptions given by a questionably obliging doctor, embraced Gordon's Gin as the menopausal cure-all. In a rambling farmhouse it was easy not to notice bottles in the pantry or empties in the dairy and to ignore her increased, prolonged absences from the sitting-room of an evening.

Her career as a Lush advanced on a steadily upward-sloping graph. She progressed from amateur night-time tippling to a slug with morning coffee and then turned professional, leaving lunch simmering on the hob while she sought the sanctuary of her bedroom for the remainder of the day.

It is natural, of course, that children should wish for parents they can feel proud of — but, as I point out to my own disappointed son and daughter twice a week, sadly unrealistic. But I would argue that in an ideal world a Basic Children's Right would be the possession of parents who do not incubate shame. It is one thing to be prissy about Mum or Dad's tired, emotional state at jolly family knees-ups, but quite another to have to drag the deadweight of a drunken parent from the floor onto the bed.

As an adolescent I minded mightily the ever-constant threat of Mum's Embarrassing Behaviour possibly being witnessed by my rural, teenage swains. Gradually, self-preservation, or just a weary hardening of heart, made me regard her with contemptible contempt. Only after I fled home and sought cultural asylum in the capital could I view her binges with any objectivity and, even then, it was basely born of distance rather than compassion.

My father and younger brother were left alone to cope. I was spared the knife-edged anxiety each time she took the car out (she drove, but always in the daytime and miraculously avoided both accident and Breathalyser). I also missed out on The Psychiatrist's Visit, which lasted 20 minutes and was never repeated. My mother being a mistress of the merry quip and the deflatory one-liner, he scuttled, de-balled, from the house, never to return.

What I was not spared, as I suspect the children of drinkers seldom are, was the legacy she left. My mother's death ten years ago, ironically of cancer and not cirrhosis of the liver, liberated shame. Coming out about a drink-dependant parent emboldens others to divulge similar childhood horrors and it seems we share not just experience but several characteristics.

We are usually placators, trained as we are to pretend that all is well, to paper over cracks, expert at spotting and swiftly stemming the incoming tide of discord. We are often, too, closet depressives, reluctant to admit this understandable deficiency, skilled at displaying a cheery public face. Conflicting official statistics exist as to whether we are unusualy prone to seek oblivion via a bottle. I am personally (but not evangelically) teetotal, managing a supercilious smile when my lovely, loutish son becomes enlivened by the grape.

What is decanter-crystal clear is that most of us carry through life the cumbersome luggage of Guilt. For as children we were impotent, as adolescents harshly judgemental and now, adults blessed with 20-20 hindsight, we are still strapped for any notion as to what we could or should have done.

Happily, this dilemma need not necessarily beset present and future generations. The organisation Alateen* specifically aims to help children of drink dependant parent. Operating under the umbrella of Al-Anon Family Groups UK and Eire, it is publicised via community-service slots on television and in teenage magazines. Alateen has over 130 branches and, encouragingly, asserts that young people today, open and socially-aware, are less inclined to be party to the old 'lace-curtain syndrome'.

Yet, inevitably, many families will continue to keep their own stoic, secret counsel, coping with chaos behind a firmly closed front door. Even now my father, well into his seventies, never mentions those dreadful years except, implicitly, by sentimental references to 'poor old Mum'.

I have attempted to be truthful here, but there is an in-built lack of honesty whenever emotive memories are committed to print. The past cannot but be sanified and tidied when contained between a beginning and an end whereas, in reality, my mother's drinking trickles ever onwards messily around me.

A more palpable deception is that, although I despaired, indeed despair still, about my family's silence, it would be wrong to disrupt unilateraly their long tradition of denial. Which is why my mother and I remain suitably, if reactionarily, anonymous. □

**Alateen and Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire, 61 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YF, 01-403 0888.*

Weekend competition

No 2925 Set by Maud Gracechurch

Wanted, stylistically appropriate replies from the *objects* that poets have celebrated: the Greek urn to Keats, a daffodil to Wordsworth, the armchair to Eliza Cook for example. Max. 14 lines by 5 June.

No 2922 Set by Belle R. Welling

Poems to fit the title of Wendy Cope's collection *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis.*

Report By Babe Bio

One thing's sertin: old Wendy needernt start wurrying abowt the competishern. A pritty perthetic entry, orl in orl, with only a few of you (sea below) wurth the tenner we're so jenerously offring.

Cocoa for Kingsley — you're surely not serious?
Shouldn't have thought it was his cup of tea;
Farewell the flagon — Lucky Jim on the wagon —
Sounds quite bizarre, Wendy. Can such things be?

Is this a case of Victorian values,
Part of some pussy-foot Thatcherite scheme,
Plain living, high thinking — and cut out the drinking
In a teetotalitarian regime?

Tell you what, Wendy — it's just a suggestion —
What about adding a snifter of gin,
Poco a poco, to each mug of cocoa,
And make Kingsley think it's a new Mickey Finn?

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Making cocoa for Kingsley Amis
(Sir John entertains)

Cocoa, Kingsley, or Bournvita?
It's really super that you've called.
Dear Phil Larkin likes his sweeter.
(Such a shame he's going bald!)

Draw your chair up! Let's be chummy.
How I roared at *Lucky Jim*!
Chocky bickies are so yummy.
My quack has said I'll have to slim!

Don't you add a lot of whisky!
Does it really help you sleep?
When I'm tiddly, I get frisky,
So it's safer counting sheep.

E. O. PARROTT

Yes, I make a lot of cocoa,
it's the stuff that keeps him going
and it stops him going loco
and it also stops him throwing
all those fits that make the whisky-drinkers shake
(and those who throw themselves in the great wine lake).

Yes indeed, I'm quite protective —
with my calm protective arm I
offer calmly my effective
cheerful liquid chocolate charm. I
do 'save him from himself', you might well say —
and it keeps him quite effective in another sort of way!

GAVIN EWART

'Mrs M.' he calls me, though it's
Not my name, poor man —
'Mrs M.! these bloody poets
Cannot even scan!'

Stares at me, his eyes still blinking
At my laden tray:
Hot milk, cocoa, mug for drinking.
Now he's bound to say,

'*That's* what I call writing, Mrs . . .'
'Have a little sip.'
Cocoa down, he blows me kisses,
Then he has his kip.

WILL BELLENGER

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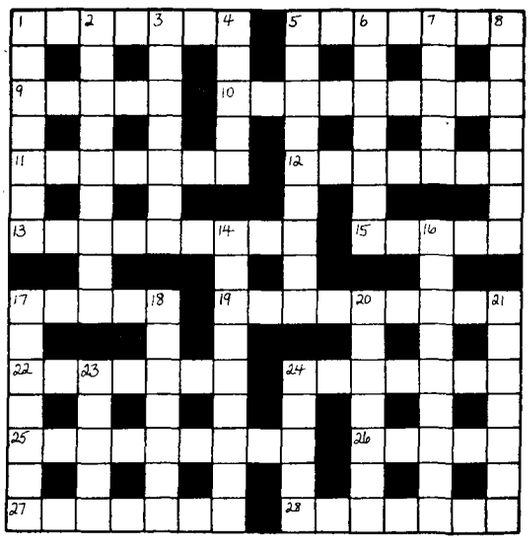
Weekend Crossword 1519

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1519, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 3 June.



Name_____

Address_____

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ACROSS

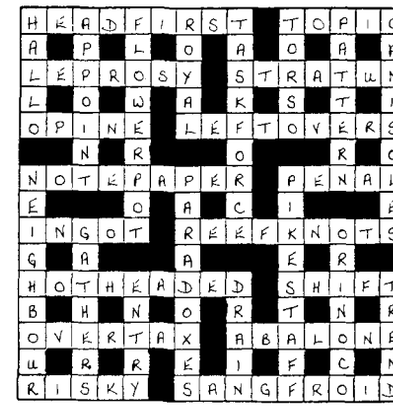
1. Mother of love is turning into a law-breaker (7)
5. A rearranged side is about to go wrong, although not leaving gaps (7)
9. Mistakes for those expecting a catch (5)
10. Food holder has to enquire about return carriage (9)
11. Conclude there is no very hot place (7)
12. Rio Tinto almost turns into something musical (7)
13. A girl we contact is in bloom (9)
15. Lines in prose translation (5)
17. Tiresome people but they would be favourites if heartless (5)
19. Proclaim a kind of map covering what determines freezing-points (9)
22. He provides food with credit when the eater gets churned up inside (7)
24. A piece in colour supplied by a frequent visitor (7)
25. Employ a snake in warm and watery abode (9)
26. Little drink before a piece of entertainment (5)
27. God is about to try reforming the self-sacrificing (7)
28. Impetuous person has an expression calling attention to the publicity (7)

DOWN

1. Animal finds a degree difficult (7)
2. They go on foot when flying fails (9)
3. Notice there are none born to wait on others (7)
4. Excel although dismissed on occasion (5)
5. Crafty about shaving without using much (9)
6. Completer of revolutions which may start either on right or left (7)
7. State in which one is paid a housing allowance (5)
8. Planes which are, funnily enough, also known as dots (7)
14. Those who don't pay attention get themselves into debt (9)
16. Writing about an immoral woman being back on the ground (9)
17. Where one has to do what birds do with food (7)
18. Magic makes one unhappy about Circe's ends (7)
20. Work on Fleet Street, having somewhere to rest in one's clothes (7)
21. Shifty dealer given about a thousand for stone (7)
23. The more faithful among the militant rue returning to work (5)
24. Marriage as an impediment? (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1517



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Reply to: ***The Secretary, BCM Box 4828, London WC1N 3XX.***

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ASTMS is an Equal Opportunities employer.

Application forms are obtainable from: **the General Secretary, ASTMS, 79 Camden Road, London NW1 9ES.** The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is **Friday 9 June 1986.**

NUPE

EQUAL RIGHTS OFFICER

A vacancy has arisen for an Equal Rights Officer to work at NUPE's Head Office in Woolwich.

A major function of the successful applicant would be to service the Race National Advisory Committee and to offer advice and assistance to the Union on all matters relating to race. The postholder would, however, also be responsible for advising the Union on all other equal rights' issues such as gay and lesbian rights, disabled workers' rights and similar matters. The person appointed would need to work closely with the Women's Officer.

The salary for this post will be £14,655 per annum, inclusive of a London Weighting allowance. A car will be provided.

NUPE is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from women and men from all sections of the community irrespective of their sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or religion.

Application forms may be obtained by writing on a postcard to Maureen Underwood, National Union of Public Employees, 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF, to whom they should be returned by **27 June 1986.**

Please mark your postcard 'Equal Rights Officer'.

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The successful candidate will work with **Dr Ian Procter,** who is a member of an Anglo-French research team investigating the social implications of unemployment in Coventry and Rouen. This project focusses on work attitudes, family and community structure and political culture. The project's main research instrument is a sample survey and the student's research will build upon the data generated by this, possibly by using more ethnographic techniques.

For further details and an application form, 'phone **(0203) 523147** or write to **the Secretary for Graduate Studies, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.** The closing date for applications is **Wednesday, 11 June 1986.**

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ATTRACTIVE, FULLY mature professional *female, seeks similar sapient, solvent,* ebullient male counterpart, and London arts lover. Box (21)3041. N21.14

ATTRACTIVE LADY, 49, wishes to meet warm, caring man with humour, intelligent and solvent. I'm interested in music, theatre, travel and cooking. Cambridge area. Photo appreciated. Box (21)3070. N21.15

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL *woman,* 52, seeks intelligent, genuine and positive male companion for concerts, country walks, travel and perhaps lasting relationship. Oxford area. Box (20)3013. N20.13

BACHELOR, 40, London, Wordsmith wonders if there is a ladysmith seeking relationship without dependence, dependencies and *dependents, for thespian times and tender* togetherness. Box (21)3033. N21.16

CLASSY MEDIA lady, middleageless, enjoys arts, sports, outdoors, tray suppers and 'telly', suddenly missing laughs and smiles with similarly caring, sharing, attractive London based man, 50s/60s. Non-smoker. Box (21)3043. N21.17

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HOME COUNTIES based Continental lady graduate, 35, divorced, financially independent, 2 children, very attractive, non smoker, liberal, caring and reliable, very wide interests and good social life, seeks stable, perhaps permanent, happy, warm and loving relationship/liaison (not marriage) with caring, well-mannered, well-spoken, sensitive and intelligent man of integrity, willing to invest *just as much in a relationship. Personality* valued much more than status, profession or looks. Please write extensively with telephone *number. All letters answered.* Box (21)3058. N21.20

LECTURER AND JOURNALIST; late middle-age, socialist, family orientated. Fond of walking, skiing and travel, the theatre and *cinema, books, seeks lady who loves life for* good companionship and caring relationship. Box (20)2979. N20.23

LEFTISH WOMAN (38), in platonic relationship, seeks socialist male perhaps in similar situation. Main interests: politics, cinema, literature and lots of fun! Scotland. Photo please. Box (20)3023. N20.24

LONE (but not lonely) Scotsman, 32, graduate, seeks friendly, intelligent lady, West London, any nationality. Interests: books, music, films, outdoors, cats, pubs. Box (21)3036. N21.21

MARRIED MAN, 36, successful professional, seeks happy interludes with intelligent, outgoing, married woman. Enjoys theatre, dining out and romance. Available daytime and *occasional evenings London.* Box (20)2987. N20.26

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. N15.31

POST GRADUATE West Indian scholar, 39, London based, single and bi-lingual, seeks versatile, independent female with a socialist background and charming disposition. Provinces welcome. Box (21)3026. N21.33

RELUCTANT YUPPIE (male, 31), seeks female partner for growing relationship. Enjoys humour, complexity, openness, Bach, films, cycling. West London. Box (21)3048. N21.23

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SURREY MALE, 42, presentable, solvent, amiable, bored middlebrow Leo, seeks interesting lady for non complicated relationship. Into conversation, literature, food, adventure, life. Box (21)3032. N21.25

TWO'S COMPANY: Three's a Crowd. Not always. English bachelor (male, youngish 45, own house), seeks two others (female). View to forming a friendship of three. Box (21)3039. N21.26

VERY ATTRACTIVE black girl, 20s, presentable and sociable, seeks wealthy, mature gentleman who appreciates life's finer things to spoil her. London area. Please reply *with phone number.* Box (21)3046. N21.27

VOCATIONALLY I'M successful, and nothing could induce me to move voluntarily from my rewarding public service job. At 53 I've been through one marriage, and, while space is cherished, permanent independence prospectively dismays. Is there around London a similarly situated caring and companionable woman, 40s or 50s, with whom an alliance might be mutually beneficial and who would, initially through Box (21)3052 like to exchange *notes on personal proclivities, assets and* encumbrances? N21.28

WARM, ATTRACTIVE woman teacher (mid 40s), div., interests: home-making, gardens, music, travel, family life, seeks unattached man for close relationship and companionship. Central London. Box (21)3038. N21.29

WARM, AFFECTIONATE man, middle 50s, seeks attractive lady, 40-50, for lasting *relationship, caring, sharing future, enjoying* life together. Even driving. I'll wash up. (London, South). Box (21)3037. N21.30

WARM, WITTY, jogging, jiving, single socialist (youthful 38), seeks similar (?) female holiday partner to share sun, siesta, conversation and expenses. Box (21)3035. N21.31

WOMAN, 45, *seeks man, Optimism, energy,* humour, warmth, intelligence. Good music, books, countryside, cinema, theatre etc. Non-smoker, likes children. Hope for permanency. Box (20)2988. N20.38

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487

SAT 24 MAY

"STAR WARS AND EUROPEAN *INDEPENDENCE*": *Richard Ennals,* Salman Rushdie, *E.P.* Thompson, Mary Kaldor. Dayschool, 10-5, London. £3 waged, £1.50 unwaged. Details: **END,** 01-272 9092

WED 28 MAY

READINGS AT SISTERWRITE, 190 Upper Street, London N1. This week Judith Barrington, lesbian feminist poet born in Brighton, now living in Oregon, will read from her new book of poems, *Trying to be an Honest Woman.* Elegant and passionate poems which cross two continents. 7pm. All women welcome. Wheelchair access. Addmission free. Childcare fund contributions appreciated. Phone 01-226 9782 for details.

THURS 29 MAY

PEACE NOW AND THE ISRAELI LEFT. Speaker: Adam Keller of the Progressive List for Peace and Yesh Gvul. 8pm, Lecture Theatre 3B20, King's College, The Strand, WC2. Organised by British Friends of Peace Now. Admission £2 members, £3 non-members, £1 UB40.

FRI 30 MAY

SHAW SOCIETY. Benny Green on "Shaw in the 1980s", at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Coffee 6.30pm. Lecture 7.00pm.

FRI 30 MAY

SOCIALIST SOCIETY DEBATE. Arthur Scargill, Peter Hain: **'PR: Democratic Reform or Sell Out to the Alliance?'** 8pm, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1. 70p waged, 40p unwaged.

SAT 31 MAY

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE. Annual General Meeting. 10.00am-5.00pm, Islington Town Hall, London N1.

A QUESTION OF FREEDOM? Day event at Derby Metro Cinema on Civil Liberties and Human Rights. Speakers: David Lowry, Ravi Nair, Phillip Whitehead. Film extracts: Field Diary, German Sisters, In the King of Prussia. Organisers: Derby Amnesty International. Fee: £3.50 (£2.50 conc). Details: 0332 40170.

TRESSELL THE TEACHER, Tony Benn, 3pm, Falaise Hall, Hastings. £1 waged, 50p unwaged. Tickets from Audrey Smith, 121 St Helens Road, Hastings. Tel: 442327. Org. by WEA.

SOCIALIST SOCIETY CONFERENCE
Realignment: Popular Frontism or Empowering the Powerless? Current Strategies and Historical Perspectives.
Sat 31 May. 10.30am.
Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, Brighton.
Speakers include: John Palmer, Hilary Wainwright, Sian Reynolds Alun Howkins and others.
£2/£1 unwaged.
Creche, pre-registration and details: John Gurney, 24b Charles St., Brighton.

SAT 7 JUNE

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH — ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT. Citizens' knowledge rather than professionals' property. Conference/workshops. Fleet Community Education Centre, Agincourt Road, NW3. 10am-5pm. Info: 0908 677679.

WED 11 JUNE

EXPERT SYSTEMS: afternoon seminar for information officers, researchers, communicators. £10. Contact: Lynn Quiney, Library, South Bank Polytechnic, Borough Road, London SE1 0AA. Tel: 01-928 8989 ext. 2484.

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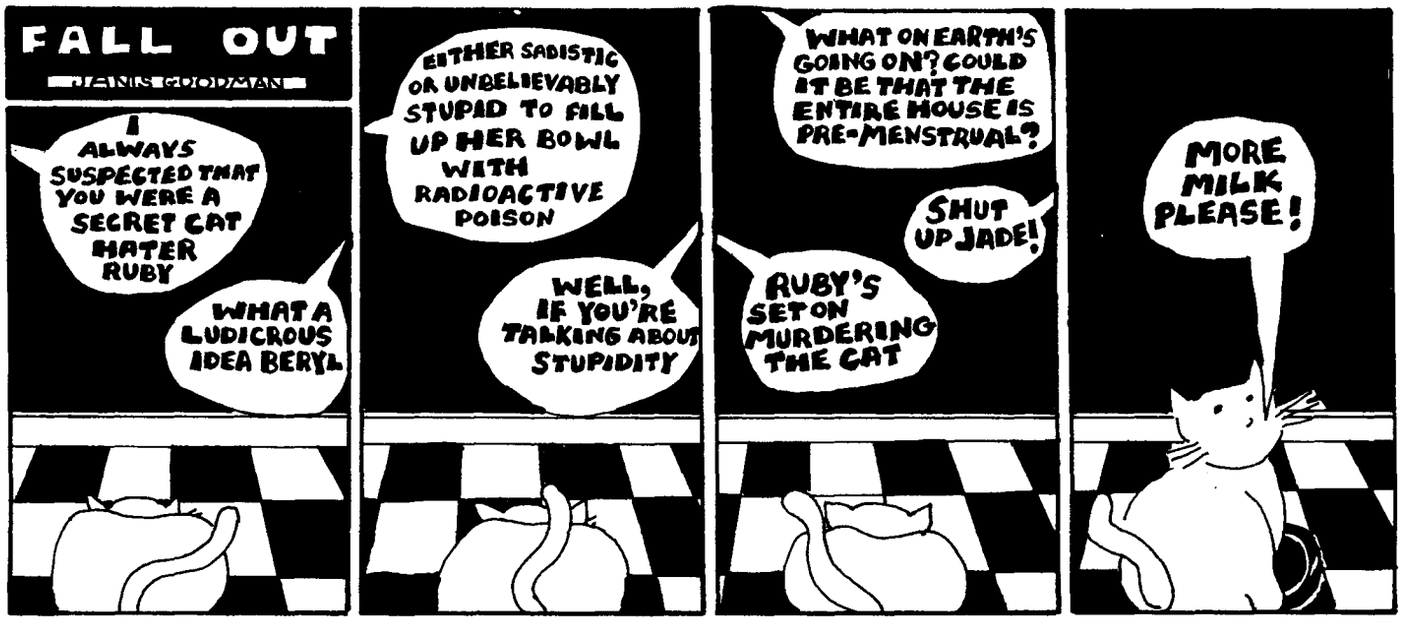
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WHAT A LUDICROUS IDEA BERYL
EITHER SADISTIC OR UNBELIEVABLY STUPID TO FILL UP HER BOWL WITH RADIOACTIVE POISON
WELL, IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT STUPIDITY
WHAT ON EARTH'S GOING ON? COULD IT BE THAT THE ENTIRE HOUSE IS PRE-MENSTRUAL?
SHUT UP JADE!
RUBY'S SET ON MURDERING THE CAT
MORE MILK PLEASE!

CHESS

ACCORDING TO Schopenhauer you can see how awful the world is by comparing the feelings of an animal being eaten with those of the animal eating it. A similar reflection would at least make a puzzle of how competitive chess could ever contribute to human happiness, if losing hurts more than winning pleases. There is always a danger that professional players will take this thought too seriously and conclude that the best utilitarian solution must always be a draw. The true chess fan knows better than to make his enjoyment of the game so precarious. It's nice to win, but it's enough to compete. And the competitive season is now getting under way in earnest, not just for the leading players, but for anyone keen enough to give up a weekend to play in an Open Swiss.

The Swiss System — basically, a matter of pairing together players with like scores — is a marvellously levelling, anti-elitist way of running a tournament that allows large numbers to compete in the same event. Comfort is not to be expected. Six-round weekend opens in particular (with 6 games to play between Friday night and Sunday afternoon) are a gruelling trial, in which you are required to play three four-hour sessions in one day. Those savage Saturdays, when play starts at 9am and does not finish until 11pm, really sort out the men from the boys, usually leaving the men to draw the conclusion that they're past it. They will still be lured back to the plonk of plastic pieces on a roll-up vinyl board and the hypnotic hum of a hundred chess clocks ticking slightly out of phase.

There are plenty of opportunities to sample an Open Swiss over the next few weeks. The Upminster, Cotswold and Staffordshire Opens are on this weekend (24-26 May). Then 30 May-1 June is the Southampton Open, which is an important event as it is the last chance to earn a qualifying place in this year's British championship. The following weekend a new venture looks attractive: the 1st Halpern and Woolf London Open is to be played at Porchester Hall, W2. This event, organised by the King's Head chess club, does have three rounds on Saturday 7 June, but as the sessions are 3½ hours long the day's play will only last from 10am to 9.30pm. After that the open trail heads up North for the Joshua Tetley British Quickplay Championships on 13-15 June in the Queen's Hotel, City Square, Leeds. The quickness of the quickplay is 30 minutes per player for the whole of each game.

And so the open circuit goes on, from weekend to weekend, throughout the summer. In general the best source for information on such events and instructions as to how to enter is the British Chess Federation's office, for which telephone **Hastings 442500**.

1986 has been designated 'London Chess Year' by the BCF, a piece of hype supported by a whole string of events — so far the GLC International and the UK-US Match of Champions between Speelman and Alburt — but of course above all by the first world championship to be played in London. At least the coming match can be called a first for London if you count Steinitz-Zukertort in 1886 as the first official world title match — which of course makes London's first a centenary as well. 17 May was also the 150th anniversary of Wilhelm Steinitz's birth, and it is agreed on all sides that he is the first player who could justly claim to be world champion. But the beginning of his reign could also be dated at 1866, in which year he won a match in London against Adolf Anderssen (+8, −6, =0). This was one of the games:

Steinitz-Anderssen, London 1866. King's Gambit.
1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nf3 g5 4. Bc4 g4 5. Ne5?! Qh4+ 6. Kf1 Nh6 Nowadays the opening books will tell you that 6 . . . Nc6! is the most convincing refutation of White's 5th and that the gambiteer would do better to offer a piece with 5. 0-0. **7. d4 d6 8. Nd3 f3 9. g3 Qe7 10. Nc3 Be6 11. Bb3 Bg7 12. Be3 Bxb3 13. axb3 c6 14. Qd2 Ng8 15. e5 d5 16. Bg5 Qe6 17. Na4 Na6 18. Nac5 Nxc5 19. Nxc5 Qg6 20. Nxb7 Nh6 21. Nd6+ Kd7 22. h3 f6** Anderssen, bless his heart, is determined to play an attacking game, whether the position justifies it or not. **23. exf6 Bf8 24. Nb7 Nf5 25. Bf4 gxh3 26. Kf2 Qxf6 27. Be5 Qg6 28. Rxh3 Bh6?** 28 . . . Rg8 must be better. **29. Nc5+ Ke8 30. Rxh6! Nxh6 31. Bxh8 Kf7 32. Be5 Qh5 33. Qf4+ Kg8 34. Rh1! Ng4+ 35. Kg1 1-0.** If 35 . . . f2+ 36. Kg2 f1=Q+ 37. Rxf1 Qh2+ 38. Kf3 Rf8, then 39. Qxf8+ Kxf8 40. Kxg4+ is decisive.

George Botterill

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This England

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And particularly, when having to cope with sexual incidents, teachers resorted to diversion. One who became aware of two five-year-olds simulating sexual intercourse on the Wendy House carpet, said briskly: 'I can hear the kettle boiling.' Another teacher, faced with the same situation, said she knocked at the door and said: 'It's Postman Pat, I've a letter for you.' — the *Guardian* (B. Y. Brown)

But the fact has to be faced that in this country there is such a thing as a social conscience which, given half a chance, insists on good welfare services for all. Mrs Thatcher seems to have created conditions wherein that social conscience feels once again justified in rearing unashamedly its noble head. That is her triumph. — *Sunday Telegraph* (P. O'R. Smiley)

The British Rail advertising slogan of 'We're going places' rather stuck in the throat of 340 passengers aboard the Lancashire Rail Rambler on May Day. Due to a clerical error on the local signalmen's rota from the area office, the train was stranded west of Barrack's Station (along with the normal service train) at 6.30 am, awaiting the upsignal to proceed. It did not alter because there was no signalman on duty for the first shift. — *Burnley Express* (George Moor)

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